

LIFE STORIES FOR YOUNG I.E. PL.

EUGÉNIE, EMPRESS OF THE FRENCH

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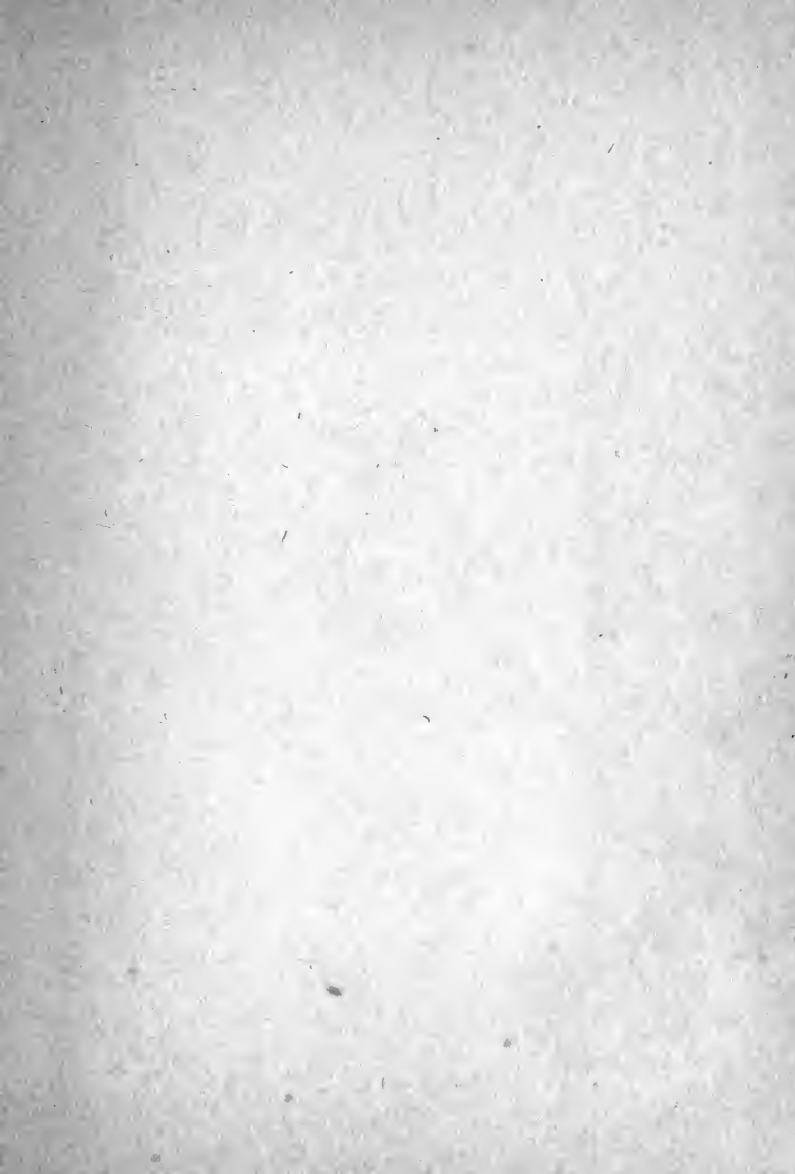


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LIFE STORIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

EUGÉNIE

EMPRESS OF THE FRENCH

LIFE STORIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Translated from the German by

GEORGE P. UPTON

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*E*UGENIE

LIFE STORIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

EUGÉNIE

EMPRESS OF THE FRENCH

*Translated from the German of
Erich Holm*

BY

GEORGE P. UPTON

Author of "Musical Memories," "Standard Operas," etc.

Translator of "Memories," "Immensee," etc.

WITH FOUR ILLUSTRATIONS



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Preface

IN a recent interview at her villa in the Riviera, the ex-Empress Eugénie is reported to have said: "I have lived; I have been; I do not ask more. I ask not to be remembered. Between my past and my present there exists not half a century, but ten centuries. Men have changed, times have changed. It is a dream that is dissipated." It is a fascinating story, as told in these pages, the career of this granddaughter of a Scotch wine-merchant, who by the power of her personal charm, the incentive of her ambition, and the boldness of her resolution, achieved her purpose, though stigmatized an upstart and adventuress, and eventually driven from the throne and doomed to spend her remaining days brooding over the loss of her power and her beauty; over France's crushing defeat in what the short-sighted Empress lightly termed "my war"; over her folly in urging Napoleon into the war; sorrowing over his death, and chiefly, lamenting the death of her son at the hands of Zulu savages in that far-away land whither she had urged him to go. Hers is an adventurous, a romantic, in every way an extraordinary, life-story. It shows what one of determined will and fixed purpose may do. But

PREFACE

was it worth the doing? In these days, looking back over her career, all she can say is: "I am the past. I am the distant horizon where exists a mirage, a shadow, a phantom, a living sorrow. I am an old woman, poor in everything that makes a woman rich. My husband, my son — that brave boy — they are gone. My eyes no longer turn to the future. I live only in my youth. There is nothing for me but to wait. My dreary winter is nearly over." Poor Eugénie! That she still clings to the hope of seeing a descendant of Napoleon on the throne of France is evidenced by a letter to an old soldier who recently appealed to her for help, in which she says: "As her majesty admits that every old soldier of the empire has remained faithful to the sacred cause, to the imperial eagles, it is necessary so that her majesty may be assured of a devotion of which she — or rather the legitimate heir to the throne — will perhaps have need sooner than one thinks, that she receives from you a letter in which she will find the expression of your unshakable devotion to the memory of Napoleon III and to the Imperial cause, as well as the expression of your mistrust of the present regime."

G. P. U.

CHICAGO, *July*, 1910.

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Eugénie

Empress of the French

Chapter I

The Youth of Eugénie

AT the beginning of the last century there dwelt in the city of Malaga in Spain a merchant named Kirkpatrick. Although descended from a Scotch family of distinction that had been forced by the fall of the Stuarts to flee their native land, this later scion of the race earned his livelihood by the sale of wines which he dispensed with his own hand in a room at the rear of his shop. The business prospered and he became a rich man, exporting large quantities of Spanish wines to foreign countries; but he still kept his wine-room in Malaga, assisted by his four daughters, who did much to attract custom.

The lofty family traditions of the Kirkpatricks of Closeburn could scarcely have been expected to be remembered amid the practical duties of the merchant's busy life, but his beautiful daughters were by no means unaware of their high descent nor

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without hope of elevating themselves once more to the rank of their ancestors. Of the four sisters, Manuela, the third, was the most aspiring as well as the most beautiful. Even when busy serving wine and chatting gayly with the gentlemen who frequented her father's wine-room, her mind was constantly dwelling on the traditions of her house, and in the glories of the past she forgot the sordid surroundings of the present. Although a true daughter of the soil from which she sprang, Manuela was very different from the ordinary Spanish girl, who is often indolent and ignorant; for with her Scotch blood she inherited the energy without which her dreams and ambitions could never have been realized. Determined to rise in the world, and with nothing but herself and her beauty to depend upon, she decided that only a brilliant marriage could accomplish her ends; and to achieve this she was ready to use any means or make any sacrifice.

Among the officers stationed at that time in Malaga, most of whom were frequent patrons of Kirkpatrick's wine-room, was a colonel of artillery in the Spanish army, Count Manuel Fernandez de Teba. No longer young, and far from attractive in person, having lost an eye, and being very short-sighted besides, he was little fitted to awaken tender sentiments in the fair sex; but Manuela was not to be daunted by this. His heart seemed a citadel not too difficult of conquest, and without regard to his appearance she devoted herself to the study of

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his antecedents. The result of these genealogical researches exceeded her fondest hopes, for they proved that the bluest blood of Spain flowed in Count Teba's veins. He was descended from the noble Genoese family of Porto-Carrero, which, emigrating to Estremadura in the fourteenth century, had secured by marriage the right to bear some of the most illustrious names of Spain as well as the heirship to the joint estates of Teba, Banos, and Mora. He was the second son, it is true, but his elder brother was unmarried; and if she united her future with his, the ambitious maiden could reckon with some security on attaining in time the rank and position to which she aspired.

Her father's increasing prosperity, no less than her own remarkable beauty, caused many younger and handsomer suitors to lay their homage at Manuela's feet, but however favored any one of these may have believed himself, he was now cast remorselessly aside. Her course once decided on, she lost not a moment in setting her hand to the work. She showed Count Teba the most delicate attentions, the most flattering deference; for him were reserved her sweetest smiles, her tenderest glances, until at last the credulous nobleman's admiration kindled into passion, and without even consulting his family, Manuel Fernandez, afterwards Count de Montijo and Duke de Peneranda, married Maria Manuela, daughter of the wine-merchant Kirkpatrick. The young Countess at once set up an establishment on

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the grandest scale. Her salons became the resort of the richest and most distinguished officers, and she charmed every one with her hospitality, her beauty, and her wit.

While she was enjoying her triumph to the full, however, evil tongues were soon busy over the free and easy tone said to prevail in the home of the worthy pair — a rumor that quickly found its way to the Count de Montijo. From the first he had strongly disapproved of his brother's unsuitable marriage, and, indignant at the gossip caused by his sister-in-law's behavior, he determined to prevent their becoming his heirs, by making a marriage himself in his old age. Manuela was seized with fury at this news; but prudence soon gained the upper hand, and instead of sulkily avoiding her new relatives she made every effort to win their approval, a course that was the less difficult for her to pursue, as, to her secret joy, the marriage remained childless. Tired of living in her native place where she was constantly reminded of her humble origin, she finally persuaded her husband to leave Malaga; and with their little daughter Francisca Theresa they moved to Granada, where the Count's brother had his residence. There, on the fifth of May, 1826, the future Empress of the French, Maria Eugénie, was born — the same day of the same month on which Napoleon the Great had died.

Eugénie's mother was a perfect woman of the world. Brilliant and clever and mistress of the art

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of conversation, she far surpassed the ordinary Spanish woman in intellect as well as wit. It was not strange, therefore, that with all these charms at her command she had succeeded in winning over her brother-in-law and sister-in-law, and establishing herself in their favor; so that Count Teba's family soon became welcome guests at all the Montijo entertainments, where they were received with the utmost courtesy and respect. But even this did not satisfy Manuela. She longed for a life of more freedom and unrestraint, and to climb yet higher in the ranks of society. Her ambition was destined to be fulfilled, for before many years had passed Count Teba stood beside the bier of his childless brother; and his wife now persuaded him to take up his residence in Madrid.

The domestic life of Eugénie's parents had never been a harmonious one. Her mother's extravagance and coquetry, together with the jealous and violent temper of her father, soon banished the genius of peace from the household; and their quarrels were the more frequent and bitter from the Countess's lack of any real affection for her husband. Matters grew even worse after their arrival in the capital, for Manuela gave herself up entirely to intrigues and made her husband's life miserable. Here, too, she was prompted less by passion than by ambition, since it was through her connection with influential persons that she hoped to obtain a position at court. Among the many she attracted to her house was Gen-

eral Narvaez, at that time the most powerful man in Spain. At his intercession, the wine-merchant's daughter was made first lady-in-waiting to the youthful Queen Isabella. This coveted post she could no doubt have easily retained had she not allowed her passions for once to gain the upper hand. A young Italian for whom she had a fondness disappeared one fine day with all her jewels; and on this occasion she so far overstepped the bounds permissible even at the Spanish court that it was intimated to her she would do well to leave Madrid.

While their mother was thus coquetting and intriguing at court, Eugénie and her sister, two years older than herself, had been left at the Sacred Heart Convent in Paris. The Countess now took the two girls away with her, and, leaving her husband in Madrid, began a pleasant life of travel, dividing her time between London, Paris, and the fashionable watering-places, everywhere gathering about her a circle of friends and adorers, many of them men distinguished in the world of art and learning,—although the greater part of her admirers belonged to that class which lives in enjoyment of the present, preferring the pleasures of the senses to those of the mind. Over her young daughters' acquaintances and associates, however, she kept a close watch; whatever her own indiscretions may have been during this period, she carefully guarded their innocence from all evil influences. She neglected no opportunities for improving their minds, and it was

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then that the foundations were laid of that excellent education which no one ever ventured to deny the Empress Eugénie.

It was impossible for the careful mother not to perceive the attention excited wherever they went by her younger daughter's beauty, her regular features, exquisite coloring, large clear eyes, and wonderful golden hair; and while she little dreamed that Eugénie was destined to become the sovereign of a great European nation, with justifiable maternal pride she began to hope that her child might rise to even greater rank than she herself had attained. To pave the way to this good fortune, the Countess Montijo made another attempt to regain her position at court, but met with a prompt refusal. Narvaez, however, who was still in power, took her under his protection without more ado; and on the death of her husband, in 1839, she determined to return to Madrid, where, at the expiration of her period of mourning, the handsome widow accordingly appeared, accompanied by her still more lovely daughters, Francisca, at that time seventeen years old, and Eugénie, fifteen. The sisters were a complete contrast to each other though equally beautiful. The elder was darker and more slender, and her features were softer than Eugénie's, though her face had less character.

Through the zeal and influence of Narvaez and their mother's prudence and perseverance, the Queen was finally induced to take the young girls into her court, but their position there was by no means an

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enviable one. As daughters of a woman who in spite of her personal attractions was well known to have led an irregular life, they were looked upon with general suspicion; and as they constantly appeared with this mother in society, it was only natural that members of their own sex should hold aloof from them, while the men redoubled their attentions in consequence. The Countess Montijo was shrewd enough to see that she must proceed with caution if she wished her plans realized; therefore, to protect her daughters from the reefs on which her own reputation had been wrecked, she kept all undesirable cavaliers at a respectful distance. Among all those who sought the young Countesses' favor there was only one she considered worthy to occupy the position of her son-in-law, the Duke of Berwick and Alva; him she encouraged in every way, permitting him to ride and drive with her daughters and accompany them to the theatre, giving him an intimate footing in the family. His companionship was a source of delight to both sisters, and he soon became the centre of their thoughts, possessing as he did the art of making himself so agreeable to both that each one fancied herself the object of his preference.

Eugénie adored Alva with all the intensity of a first love, endowing him with all the loftiest and most noble qualities; and, worshipping this image created by her fancy, believed herself loved in return. The mother, however, more experienced in the faithlessness of man, began to suspect that he had no

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intention of choosing either daughter as a companion for life; accordingly she set before him, when he came one day to call, the serious alternative of declaring himself or severing all intercourse with the family; to which ultimatum the Duke replied by requesting the hand of the elder. When Francisca, radiant with joy, hastened to her sister's room to announce the great news she found her in bed. At first she thought her asleep, but on coming closer discovered to her horror that Eugénie's eyes were fixed and staring, her forehead covered with beads of moisture, her features drawn and convulsed — she had taken poison! Francisca's screams of distress quickly brought her mother and the maid to the scene. A physician was summoned, and Eugénie was restored to consciousness. A long and serious illness followed. In her delirious ravings she betrayed the fact that, hidden behind a door, she had overheard the Duke's avowal and in despair had tried to end her life. Her recovery was slow and tedious. Even after she had been pronounced out of danger, her nervous system showed traces of the shock in a slight trembling, a nervous quiver of the eyelids, that never entirely left her. The sudden attacks of depression, the fits of weeping that sometimes seized her in after years, even in the midst of some festivity, may also be ascribed to the effects of the poison taken in her youth.

Still deeper were the traces left on the young girl's character by this unhappy experience. Though

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taught by pride to conquer her love for the husband of her sister, she was forced to be a daily witness of that sister's happiness and to endure the pity with which she was universally regarded, added to which was the galling conviction that the Duke himself suspected her secret. The once shy and modest maiden became a bold, forward coquette, striving to forget her sufferings in a whirl of pleasure and amusement, craving admiration, ambitious and frivolous. As a child she had always preferred boys' sports to the usual occupations of girls, and excelled in riding, swimming, and fencing. Now she might be seen any afternoon galloping bareback through the streets of Madrid, smoking a cigar or a cigarette. She devised all sorts of fanciful costumes that only she could wear, often appearing in the Andalusian national dress. She was a frequent visitor at the theatre and all public places of amusement, and had a passion for bull-fights. One of the toreadors, for whom she embroidered a splendid cloak, was her declared lover. She rarely missed one of these gory festivals; and, seated on the lowest tier among the most enthusiastic spectators, in her Andalusian costume, she was always the centre of attraction. The womanly modesty that had made Eugénie so charming in her early girlhood had vanished, but she was even more beautiful and fascinating. She was surrounded by admirers, and encouraged the addresses of dukes and princes till her coquetries aroused the jealousy of the Queen. But no one paid court to

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her seriously. Suitors were naturally shy of choosing a wife who often appeared in masculine attire, who wore the most startling and conspicuous bathing costumes to excite admiration while in the water, and whose hand was as familiar with riding-whip and stiletto as with fan or bouquet.

In spite of her many extravagances, however, Eugénie's youth was marked by a gay thoughtlessness and daring that were most attractive. Her self-reliant nature could brook no restraint. She scorned prudence and yielded rashly to every impulse. The attention she attracted could not fail to furnish food for gossip, and malicious tongues were soon busy with her reputation — a fact which did not deter her in the least from pursuing her fondness for adventure. This indifference to public opinion also led her, unfortunately, to defy custom and snap her fingers at the strict etiquette prescribed at court. At last she went out alone one evening with one of the young pages for a long walk. Whispers of this romantic promenade soon reached the ears of Queen Isabella, who, though setting the worst possible example herself in regard to morals, insisted on the strictest propriety in the behavior of her ladies; and both culprits were summarily dismissed from her service.

Like all Spanish girls, Eugénie had been brought up from her earliest years a devout Catholic, with the deepest reverence for the Pope and the Roman religion, a devotion that in time became almost

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fanaticism and furnished her enemies with a weapon of attack against which she was powerless to defend herself. After her dismissal from court she began to reflect on the difference between a religious life and one of idle pleasure. While at the convent, the contrast between the unselfish devotion of the nuns and the atmosphere of her parents' disordered household made a deep impression on the young girl's mind, and the Church seemed a blissful refuge from the storms of life. Now—feeling more and more conscious of the void within her—a passion for religion seized her, a longing to escape from the world of lies and slander in which she lived, into a purer atmosphere, a new field of activity. The Church held out its arms to her, and in them she determined to seek relief and to find strength to devote her life to the poor and suffering. It is said that when Eugénie went to the convent prepared to take the vows, an old half-witted nun approached, gazed at her with dull, vacant eyes, and suddenly exclaimed, "My daughter, do not seek shelter behind our walls. You are destined to adorn a throne!"

In her state of religious ecstasy these words could not fail to impress Eugénie deeply. It seemed a voice from heaven, speaking to her through the nun and consecrating her to the world. The Countess Montijo, too, did all she could to strengthen her daughter in this conviction, and persuaded her at length, instead of burying herself in a cloister, to travel abroad with her again.

Chapter II

Eugénie's Marriage to Louis Napoleon

AS a child, Eugénie was seldom seen without a knot of violets in her hair or in her belt; and when the scorching summer sun of Spain made these blossoms scarce, a shepherd boy was commissioned to bring them to her from the heights of the Sierra Nevada. Even when older, she still wore her favorite flowers on all occasions, for a gipsy had foretold that her fortune "would flourish with the violet." So on that memorable evening toward the end of the thirties, when at a Spanish watering-place Napoleon and Eugénie (she, then, almost a child) saw each other for the first time, she wore a wreath of violets in her hair.

"I shall never forget," said an eye-witness of the scene, "the way in which the Prince gazed at the young Countess when she was presented to him."

The acquaintance was renewed some years later during a winter residence in London (1847-48), and it was only natural that these two, brought together by chance, should be attracted to one another. Both were of noble rank; both had a longing for fame and splendor; both were unfaltering in the pursuit of their ambitions; both were rich in hopes, yet poor in

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worldly possessions; and though full of courage and faith in the future, both were in reality adventurers. They were soon on terms of intimacy, and Louis Napoleon could no doubt have won the hand of Eugénie at that time. But his future was still uncertain. He was poor and heavily in debt, with the reputation of leading a dissipated life; and although she returned his love, she was prudent enough to renounce for the time being the opportunity of becoming a princess. Convinced that her lover's aspiring dreams would be realized, however, and wishing to have a claim on his gratitude as well as his affections, she wrote him as follows, on their parting:—

“You want to go to Paris to begin the struggle for power; to become consul, president, dictator. But suppose these goals are attained, will you stop there? Will that satisfy your ambition? Without a doubt you will aim yet higher, and then how troublesome you would find a wife! An Emperor must keep the place beside him for an Empress. Should your plans fail, on the other hand, should France not offer what you expect, then and only then, come back to me and I will give you an answer to your proposal. Do not forget there is one heart ready to recompense you for any troubles—for all disappointed hopes.”

On the news of the Revolution of February and Louis Philippe's flight, Napoleon hastened to Paris. At the first election for a constitutional National

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Assembly (April, 1848) his cause met with little support. Not until the supplementary election did the Prince's adherents appear as a party, but once in the field they spared no pains to win the victory. Bonapartist proclamations were distributed throughout Paris; and in the course of eight days no less than six of the principal organs of the press came out for him openly. Results showed the progress made by the party even in this short time, for the Prince was chosen representative of the capital of France; and similar faith was shown in him by three other Departments. His election aroused long and heated debates in the National Assembly, and his friends began to fear for his safety if he remained in Paris. Returning to London, therefore, he sent a letter to the legislature, stating that in consideration of the hostile attitude toward him taken by the executive power, he felt it his duty to renounce an honor it believed him to have won by fraud.

This politic withdrawal, together with the unceasing efforts of his friends, served to influence public opinion still more in his favor. At the new election following the June uprising the people of Paris chose Napoleon for the second time as their representative, and after an exile of thirty years, he hastened back to the capital to take his place in the Assembly, from which a few months later (December 20) he was elevated to the Presidency of the Republic.

About the time of Napoleon's departure Eugénie and her mother also left London, spending that

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summer at Spa and the following winter in Brussels, surrounded as usual by a swarm of admirers. But all this time, while the Prince was swiftly and surely approaching the throne of France, Eugénie's eyes were firmly fixed on Paris. With eager gaze she watched the rising of Napoleon's star, and shortly before the Empire was proclaimed, the Spanish Countesses appeared in the capital. At last Louis Napoleon was made Emperor. More than eight million Frenchmen had voted for the restoration of the dynasty, and on the first of December, 1852, the Senate, the legislative body, and the Council of State paid him homage at St. Cloud. Although formally assuming the title for the first time on this occasion, he had in reality ruled as absolute sovereign since the *Coup d'État* (December 2-5, 1851). His entry into Paris as Emperor, amid the thunder of cannon, the pealing of trumpets, and the shouts of the multitude, was merely the crowning of a work shrewdly planned and cleverly executed, denounced by his enemies as a crime and glorified by his friends as a heroic achievement.

The magnificent entertainments given by the Prince-President in the Élysée Palace, and the yet more splendid ones that followed at the Tuileries after he became Emperor, had been presided over with tact and grace by his cousin Mathilde, daughter of the ex-King of Westphalia. Fifteen or sixteen years before, during a visit which Mathilde de Montfort had paid to Arenenberg, the residence of Queen Hor-

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tense, there had been some talk of a marriage between her and Louis Napoleon. Hortense, who loved her niece with all a mother's tenderness, had looked forward with joy to a union so suitable in every respect, and it had been agreed upon in a family council of Bonapartes. But the Prince's first premature attempt to secure his uncle's throne put an end to the plan, and Mathilde was married, in 1841, to the millionaire Prince of San Donato, Anatole Demidoff. After a few years of childless and unhappy marriage they separated, the Princess retiring to a villa near Paris, whence she was summoned to the capital by her cousin when he became President. The youthful lovers had each led a stormy life since their last meeting, and the romantic attachment that had drawn them together at Arenenberg had long since evaporated. In its place a firm and quiet friendship had arisen, and for the second time Napoleon thought seriously of marrying his cousin. It was the dearest wish of all the Bonapartes; but again fate intervened, this time by the Church's refusal to annul the Princess's marriage with Demidoff. The Prince-President found himself forced therefore to seek elsewhere for a bride.

He sued in vain for the hand of a Russian Princess, and was refused in turn by a sister of the King of Spain, and the Portuguese Duchess of Braganza. However alluring may have been the chance of becoming sovereign of France, these princesses had little desire to trust their fate in the hands of an

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adventurer. Well-meaning friends next drew his attention to the poor but beautiful Carola de Wasa, a cousin of King Gustavus the Fourth of Sweden, afterwards Queen of Saxony. An envoy was sent to negotiate preliminaries, and her family requested time for consideration; but the Princess, who was most unfavorably impressed with Napoleon's portrait, protested with tears against the proposed marriage. Beside himself at these repeated rebuffs, the Prince swore to win the daughter of some royal house if forced to do it sword-in-hand, and continued in his quest. Through his friend Lord Malmesbury, he urged Queen Victoria to arrange an alliance between himself and her cousin, Princess Adelaide; and though some objections were raised by the Queen and Prince Consort, the matter was still under consideration when, on January 19, 1853, the world was amazed by the following paragraph which appeared in *La Patrie*, the semi-official organ of Paris, and was copied without comment in all the other journals:

"According to reliable report, a happy event, calculated to strengthen His Majesty's Government and ensure the future of his dynasty, is soon to take place. It is said that the Emperor is about to be married to Mlle. de Montijo de Teba. Official announcement of the approaching marriage will be made to the Legislature on Thursday, the twenty-second of January. The Countess belongs to one of the noblest families of Spain. She is a sister of the Duchess of Alva and is noted for her wit and cleverness, as well as her remarkable beauty."

EUGÉNIE'S MARRIAGE

Needless to say, Eugénie had gone to Paris solely for the purpose of meeting Napoleon, and after her arrival she had waited patiently for an opportunity of obtaining access to him. Introduced by Rothschild and his daughter, and accompanied by the Spanish Prince Camerata, she finally made her appearance in the court circle for the first time at Compiègne in 1852. It was at one of the hunts given by the Prince-President; and the grace and skill with which she managed her fiery Andalusian excited the admiration of all present. Napoleon himself was completely fascinated. Their former meetings at once recurred to him with a rush of youthful memories, and for the rest of the day he scarcely left her side. Nor did it end here; after the court had returned to Paris the Countess and her mother were never permitted to miss an entertainment at the Tuileries or the Élysée.

The flattering attentions paid to Mlle. Montijo by the sovereign could not remain long unnoticed or unremarked. It was now merely a question of improving the moment. No opportunity for bringing herself to his notice or of displaying her charms to the best advantage was neglected, and far outshining, as she did, all the women of Napoleon's circle at that time, Eugénie soon succeeded in arousing his old passion for her. His warm and ardent devotion was such a contrast to his usual calm self-possession that the whole court was astonished, although no one dreamed that the affair would

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end in marriage. It is doubtful whether the Emperor himself had any such idea in the beginning, having resolved in his days of poverty and exile to wed none but a royal princess. He only went so far as to intimate to Eugénie that he would esteem himself happy in being her lover.

But she was no longer the innocent girl of sixteen, cherishing a romantic passion for an Alva and deeming no sacrifice too great for her love. Genuine as her affection doubtless was for Louis Napoleon, she would make no sacrifices without gaining something in return. At the height of his power and fame the man who had brought about a revolution and made himself sole ruler of France by his shrewdness and resolution seemed in her eyes the ideal of manly courage and heroism; yet none the less, the hot-blooded Andalusian showed herself in this case as cold as ice. Her experience of life had taught her that denial was the surest means of stimulating a passion. The Emperor was not easily caught, however. He despatched a confidential friend to the Countess de Montijo, not to ask for her daughter's hand, but to make it clear to the shrewd woman of the world that Eugénie could not count on being Empress. Reasons of state prevented his placing the crown on the head of his beloved, although such an event might not be an impossibility should he be free to follow his desires in the future. But the Countess, like her daughter, being well aware of the surest means of attaining her end, made short



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work of the Emperor's envoy. Repeated attempts at persuasion proved equally fruitless, and Eugénie finally sent Napoleon, with her respectful greetings, the message: "Cæsar's wife should be above suspicion."

Goaded on by this reserve, the Emperor could no longer restrain himself, and the Countess's persistent refusals furnished him a welcome excuse for broaching the plan of a marriage with her. It met with violent opposition from all his relatives and friends, who did all in their power to dissuade him from it, imploring him to choose, in default of a royal princess, at least some French lady of rank or lineage known to the people. To divert him from his purpose a marriage was proposed with the Polish Princess Czartoryska. But completely absorbed by his passion for Eugénie their opposition only served to fan the flame, and at last, to end the painful subject, he asked one of his court ladies, the Princess Lieven, whether he should choose the Princess Czartoryska or Mlle. de Montijo. To which she cleverly replied, "If you leave it to me, Sire, I prefer the Cachucha to the Mazurka"—an answer which Napoleon accepted as the voice of fate. At the earliest opportunity he sent a formal request to the Countess Montijo for the hand of her daughter, and was of course welcomed by both with open arms.

The news of the betrothal excited endless wonder but little satisfaction. There was almost a panic in the Bourse, that political barometer, and the Em-

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peror's intimate friends and family went about with gloomy faces. The proposed marriage was openly opposed in the ministerial council and regarded with great disfavor by the general public; in short, only three persons were really pleased — Eugénie, her mother, and Napoleon. As for the first, her wildest hopes were at last to be realized. From doubtful obscurity she was to rise to loftiest heights. Providence had chosen her for this position and she bowed to its decree. The week that intervened between the betrothal and the wedding ceremonies slipped by in an intoxication of happiness. She was greeted on all sides with respect and adulation, and overwhelmed with protestations of devotion from the courtiers. The proudest nobles of France paid homage to her. Her enemies were silent, while Napoleon's friends who had been most bitterly opposed to the match now fawned upon her, greedy for favors from their future Empress.

The civil marriage was celebrated quietly on the twenty-ninth of January; but the magnificence of the religious ceremony exceeded anything that had been seen in France since the days of the great Napoleon. From early morning a double row of troops lined the way from the Tuileries to Notre Dame. All Paris was on the alert to catch at least a glimpse of the spectacle. The railroads brought more than two hundred thousand people into the capital from the provinces, and a motley throng filled the streets, richly decorated with flags and

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banners bearing the names of Napoleon and Eugénie, and gay with the light *toilettes* of the ladies, and the gold embroidered uniforms of the soldiers glittering in the sun. Although midwinter, the sky was clear and the air mild as spring. About half-past eleven, Eugénie started from the Élysée for the Tuileries. Her mother was seated beside her, and opposite them the master of ceremonies, Count Tascher de la Pagerie. The natural beauty of the bride was enhanced still more by the magnificent gown she wore, a gift from the city of Liége. It was of white velvet with an overdress of costly lace woven in a pattern of violets. A jewelled girdle encircled the waist, and on her head was the diamond coronet worn by Marie Louise on her wedding day, attached to which were the lace veil and a wreath of orange blossoms. As the prospective Empress entered the gates of the Tuileries, Prince Napoleon and the Princess Mathilde appeared at the foot of the staircase to receive her, while trumpets sounded and the troops presented arms.

Precisely at noon a salute of a hundred and one guns from the Hôtel des Invalides proclaimed that Their Majesties were entering their coach. A huge vestibule had been erected in front of the Cathedral, adorned with paintings representing the saints and olden kings and queens of France. The church was brilliantly illuminated with thousands of wax tapers; and as the imperial pair emerged from the vestibule, the trumpets again sounded, all the bells

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of Paris rang out, the organ pealed, and the whole assembly arose while the Archbishop of Paris advanced and stood before Their Majesties. At the lower end of the church was a platform occupied by five hundred musicians, and everywhere a mass of gilding and floral decoration met the eye. Curtains embroidered with golden bees covered the great windows. From the galleries fell velvet hangings bearing the name of the Empress in raised embroidery. In the nave of the church stood the throne; above it, supported by a huge golden eagle, a canopy of red velvet bordered with ermine. The transepts, in which the highest dignitaries of the Empire were seated, were lined with superb paintings, and from the ceiling hung banners bearing the names of the principal cities of France. The court officials stationed themselves on one side, the ministers and deputies on the other, as the imperial pair took their places under the canopy surrounded by princes, princesses, ladies, and cavaliers.

About one o'clock the ceremony began. It was performed by the Archbishop of Paris. The Archbishop of Versailles spread a silver bridal veil over Their Majesties, who sank on their knees; and at the conclusion of the ceremony, during the singing of the *Te Deum*, Abbé Legran handed to them the imperial marriage contract. Shrouded in costly lace and sparkling with jewels, a glittering coronet upon her head, Eugénie passed out of the Cathedral, leaning on the arm of the Emperor and preceded by the

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archbishops and all the clergy. She had reached the summit of all her hopes. The world lay at her feet. Yet at this supreme moment it was less a feeling of gratified ambition that filled her bosom than one of humility and anxiety at the burden of responsibility laid upon her shoulders. At the zenith of her fortunes, surrounded by pomp and splendor, and greeted by the cheers of the populace, she was suddenly seized with a foreboding of her coming fate. It may have been owing to her overtaxed nerves or the excitement of these new experiences, but as she came out of the Cathedral she seemed to see the features of Marie Antoinette among the crowd. Wherever she looked this face rose up before her, and with a sinking of the heart she began to realize that all this coveted splendor might be indeed a heavy burden.

Chapter III

Eugénie's Personality

AFTER the wedding a glowing account of the ceremony was published in the *Moniteur*, which concluded as follows:

“The interest displayed by the people in their new sovereign was prompted by more than idle curiosity. The universal admiration she excited was genuine. Those noble features, enhanced by their expression of sweetness and modesty, irresistibly attracted the working classes, who felt that the Empress regarded them with kindness and good-will.”

This assertion was not groundless, for although public opinion, as we have seen, had been against the Emperor's choice, and although among the cheering throngs that greeted the sovereigns there was much secret dissatisfaction, the spell of Eugénie's beauty and charm of manner was so potent that even her enemies were silenced by it. The lovely face with its regular delicate features suggests in contour the portraits of Mary Stuart. Her complexion was dazzling and her brown hair full of golden gleams. Under the heavy lashes and delicately pencilled eyebrows, her blue eyes, so dark as

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almost to seem black, were full of fire and softness, reflecting the tender heart and dauntless soul within. The Andalusians are famous for the beauty of their hands and feet, and Eugénie's did not belie her origin. The lines of her figure and the curves of her neck were as perfect as those of an antique statue; in short, hers was a flawless exterior in which no discord marred the complete harmony of the picture.

Thus elevated to a throne, Eugénie burned with desire to make herself beloved by the people, to excite the admiration of those about her, and silence all hints as to her birth and checkered past. Controlling her naturally impulsive and passionate nature when necessary, concealing her pride and ambition under a modest, almost humble air, she left nothing undone to add to her popularity and strengthen her position. Two qualities invaluable to a sovereign she naturally possessed — magnanimity and an open hand. Before the wedding the official journals had brought many proofs of her kindness of heart to the knowledge of the public — such as, that the Empress, having beheld an accident to a poor workman who fell from a scaffold, sprang from her coach to hasten to the aid of the unfortunate man and had him carried to a hospital; and on another occasion, seeing a poor abandoned child wandering in the street, the Emperor's bride had taken it into her own carriage and promised to provide for its future. Still another and striking instance of this was her refusal to accept a diamond necklace valued at six hundred thousand

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francs which the Municipal Council of Paris had intended to present to her. She wrote a most gracious letter conveying her thanks to the Council for their loyal intention, but declaring she could not consent that Paris should make so great a sacrifice in her behalf, or that the Emperor's wedding should lay any more burdens on the country; adding that her sole desire was to share with the Emperor the affections of the people, and expressing a wish that the six hundred thousand francs might be devoted to charity. This could not fail to create a good impression; and after the wedding many other examples of the same kind occurred. She gave freely to all who approached her with petitions, conscious only that help was needed; and many kind and consoling words accompanied the large sums she privately bestowed. Indeed, in 1863 she went so far as to insure her life in favor of the poor that they might not suffer by her death; and she laid the foundations of many noble works of charity that will cause her name to be honored long after she herself is forgotten.

Besides her generosity Eugénie possessed a thousand ways of attracting and winning people to her. The Emperor's love had raised her to the throne; it depended solely on herself and her tact to maintain her position on it. With her inborn dignity, her beauty, and her queenly grace, she was as well equipped by nature for the part as any royal princess; indeed many a sovereign born might well have envied her, as, sparkling with jewels, she stood be-

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neath the canopy of the throne to receive the foreign diplomats and nobles of the Empire. When she appeared on horseback beside the Emperor at grand reviews, or rode through the city in the imperial coach, bowing in response to the shouts of the dazzled crowds, nothing could have been more beautiful. It was plain to all that the Empress well knew how to play her part.

Seldom have two persons better suited to one another than Napoleon and Eugénie, or more completely in accord, been united. In all the pomp and power of her sovereignty she never forgot that it was to him she owed it all; and in proportion as the sense of her own importance rose, her love and admiration for him increased also. In the eyes of the world he had taken a step downward in his choice of a bride; it was now her task to prove that "the adventuress" could be as useful to the dynasty as a consort born in the purple.

"I would rather be spoken ill of than not be spoken of at all!" Louis Napoleon had exclaimed when his first attempts to bring about a political revolution had only excited pity and derision. Even at that time he had studied the French people well, and knew their weak spot was vanity. To flatter the national vanity therefore became one of his principal agencies for maintaining his power; and while in private life he loved an almost plebeian simplicity, in public no effect was too striking or too spectacular to keep up his imperial state.

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No one knew better than Eugénie how to arrange these brilliant effects. Ever since the days when she was the companion of toreadors and the heroine of the Corso, love of display and notoriety had been her ruling passion. She may not have been conscious of this in the beginning, but what was at first a habit became by degrees a necessity; and just as the actress thirsts for applause, so Eugénie craved the admiration and approval of the populace. As the actress eagerly searches the newspaper columns after each appearance for the notices of her performance, so Eugénie, after every public entertainment or review or excursion, devoured the descriptions published of her costumes and appearance, reveling in the praises lavished on her person, and spurred on thereby to fresh efforts to win public favor. She studied the question of her *toilettes* as if it were a religion and she its high priestess. Most of the fashions of that brilliant period were set by her, and the lists of guests invited to court entertainments were subjected to her personal supervision. Even ladies of high rank were sometimes refused admission to the Tuileries should their costumes not suit Her Majesty.

Brought up among the Spanish aristocracy, famous for elegance and stateliness of manner, and yet perfectly familiar with the lighter customs of French society, Eugénie succeeded in imparting to her court a tone of delicacy as well as luxury and magnificence that made it famous, not only through-

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out France, but over half the world. Before she had been a month on the throne, a thousand tales were circulated of her beauty, wit, and generosity. The most enthusiastic accounts were printed of all she said and did; and the attention of the public was so occupied with her that it almost forgot to criticise the politics of the Emperor. Wherever the imperial pair appeared they were surrounded by eager throngs; and although here and there some expressions of disapproval might be heard, the Parisians were dazzled by a magnificence of display such as no other city of Europe could equal, and which conjured up memories of a glorious past that filled their hearts with pride.

Chapter IV

State Visit to England

HOWEVER the young Empress may have been regarded in other countries, it was generally agreed that she understood better than any of her predecessors how to hold the favor of the fickle Parisians. It was not public homage, however, that Eugénie craved so much as recognition from those princes and princesses who had scorned Mlle. Montijo, the *parvenue*. It rankled deeply in her mind that she was not of royal birth; and the most insignificant princess who could lay claim to the sovereignty which she adored became an object of envy to her. Since she could never hope to attain this or escape a past that must always serve as a weapon against her, she centred all her desires on being accepted as an equal by other reigning sovereigns and received as a guest in their palaces. Thus for a short time, at least, her origin might be forgotten.

To achieve this was by no means an easy task. All the crowned heads carefully avoided Paris, nor with all her efforts could she even win over the old aristocracy of France. Unable to comprehend that the devotion of the Legitimists to *le Roy* and his heir

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was a sacred principle, linked with precious memories of the old kingly race, she nevertheless admired their loyalty and resorted to every possible device to lure the *grandes dames* of the Faubourg St. Germain to her newly established court. But willingly as they had borne the yoke of the Bourbons, they were too proud to bend the knee before the Spaniard, and made it plain that any overtures from the usurper of their rightful sovereign's throne would be rejected with contempt.

Compared with the sorrows of her after life, these humiliations were a small matter; but galling as they were to her vanity, they were one of the sharpest thorns in her new crown. In spite of her failure to win over the old French nobility, she was not long in earning the respect of the sovereigns of Europe. Her first opportunity was unexpectedly offered by the Crimean War (1854-56) in which France's victories restored the country to its old place as foremost military power of Europe, and greatly increased the importance of Napoleon. England had reaped material advantage from the war and was loud in praise of the new Empire, and Victoria was finally forced to invite the usurper and his wife to visit her at Windsor. A personal acquaintance with the Queen of England had long been Eugénie's most ardent wish, and this invitation afforded her the greatest satisfaction. Victoria had hitherto ignored her in a very marked manner, while at the time of her marriage the English journals had not only cast

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slurs upon her origin, but boldly criticised her life and conduct. Thus it was doubly desirable for her to be received at the court of England and to make a good impression there, for could she but accomplish this, her position among other sovereigns would be greatly strengthened. By no means certain as to the reception that awaited her, she persuaded Napoleon to send over one of his ministers in advance, ostensibly to arrange articles of peace with the other powers, but charged at the same time to settle all questions of etiquette concerning the impending visit.

The event itself, however, was of a kind to gratify the most susceptible vanity and the most aspiring ambition. Toward evening of the sixteenth of April, 1855, Napoleon and Eugénie with their suite landed on the shores of England, and on the following day set out on their journey to London, accompanied by the Prince Consort. Every town and village on their route was gaily decorated. They were greeted everywhere with the greatest enthusiasm. As they passed through Hyde Park, a long line of aristocratic equipages and equestrians was drawn up on either side. At Windsor triumphal arches had been erected. Shops were closed, houses decorated, and the whole town was on foot to greet Their Majesties. Amid the shouts and cheers of the populace they entered the old castle, where Victoria welcomed them most cordially, having personally seen to all the arrangements for her guests' comfort.

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The day after their arrival the Queen bestowed the Order of the Garter on Napoleon. Following this impressive ceremony was a state banquet at which the famous Windsor gold service made its appearance; and at the gala performance in the court theatre that evening a verse in honor of Napoleon was interpolated in the English National hymn. The next day London held a grand celebration. The Emperor and Empress were lauded in the most flattering songs and speeches; and the people who had been the deadly enemies of Napoleon the First, the country in which Prince Louis Napoleon had lived as a refugee, ill, friendless, often in dire need, now hailed Napoleon the Third as its friend and ally.

The results of this visit to Great Britain were most gratifying to the imperial pair. The enthusiasm of the British made an excellent impression in France and strengthened public confidence in Napoleon's wisdom and prudence, while the friendship of the English royal family added importance to the young dynasty in Germany, and left no excuse for other sovereign houses to hold aloof from the Tuileries. Lastly, not only were Eugénie's fondest hopes realized, but she had also made a life-long friend. At their very first meeting Eugénie's charm completely won the Queen's heart. This beautiful woman with her ease and dignity of manner bore little resemblance to the notorious belle of gay resorts as she had been described; and forgetting all

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these unpleasant rumors, she succumbed at once to the Empress's attractions. The friendship thus begun grew closer with subsequent meetings and continued unbroken for many years.

A few months later, the Queen of England with her husband and two eldest children came to Paris to return her new friend's visit. For more than four hundred years no English sovereign had visited the French capital, so it was an event of great importance. The Queen, who writes with enthusiasm in her diary of the journey to France, describes their reception as follows:

"On the eighteenth of August we left Osborne about five o'clock in the morning on our yacht, the *Victoria and Albert*, reaching Boulogne about two, where we were greeted with shouts of welcome from the people and troops drawn up along the shore. The Emperor, with his staff, stood waiting in the sun till the gangplank was thrown out, when he stepped aboard. I went forward to meet him, and he kissed my hand. We four, that is, the Prince, the Prince of Wales, Princess Victoria, and myself, then entered a coach and drove through the streets, everywhere crowded with people and beautifully decorated with flags, to the railway station, the Emperor accompanying us on horseback."

In the capital great preparations had been made for their reception, Napoleon having ridden about everywhere in person to see that all was complete. At the railway station, which was covered with floral

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decorations, eighty beautiful young girls were waiting to present the Queen with bouquets. Through a sea of light from lamps and torches, amid the strains of music, the rolling of drums, and incessant cheering, the royal party made its way through the Bois to St. Cloud, where the Empress, Princess Mathilde, and all the ladies of the court were waiting to receive it.

The World's Exposition had just been opened in Paris at that time, and the week spent by the English guests at the French court was devoted to seeing that, as well as the sights of the city itself. Besides this, a number of state entertainments were given in their honor, concluding with a ball at Versailles that exceeded in magnificence any given since the time of Louis the Fourteenth. Three thousand invitations were issued for this, and all the *élite* of France were present, with many distinguished foreigners. The gay uniforms and court dresses of the men and the gorgeous costumes of the ladies, who vied with one another in their display of jewels, laces, and brocades, made a scene of surpassing brilliancy.

The Empress, who appeared at this ball in all her radiant loveliness, was taken ill during the supper and obliged to retire to her own apartments. On several other occasions also she was indisposed and forced to excuse herself. Yet though unable to take an active part in public festivities, Eugénie and Victoria became all the more intimate in their own

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private circle. Napoleon and the Prince Consort sang duets together. Victoria made several sketches of the country about St. Cloud and often visited Eugénie in her own apartments where the two princesses sat for hours together in confidential talk. A friendship so close and lasting between such widely different natures must have been founded on more than physical attraction. A mutual appreciation of each other's best qualities drew them together. Eugénie was bolder and more independent than her friend, and freer from prejudice; but Victoria had the strength and repose that come from an inherited consciousness of power, while they were united by a common devotion to their own families, and pride in the nations over which they ruled.

Chapter V

Birth of the Prince Imperial

EARLY on the morning of the sixteenth of March, 1856, a son was born to the imperial pair, and a salute of a hundred and one guns proclaimed the great news to the public, who received it with the wildest enthusiasm. The whole city was decorated with flags, garlands, and portraits of the Emperor and Empress, and ablaze with illuminations at night; while the City Council granted a sum of two hundred thousand francs for a feast for the poor. Greater still was the joy of the royal parents. The Emperor took the little Prince in his arms and carried him out to show to the assembled court, with tears of pride and happiness. He at once ordered a million francs to be distributed in charity to celebrate the event; had it publicly proclaimed that he and the Empress would act as sponsors to all legitimate children born on that day within the borders of his Empire, and issued a decree permitting all political exiles to return to France on condition that they would swear to uphold the Government and obey the laws of the country.

Soon after the birth of the Prince Imperial a congress met to determine the articles of peace which

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concluded the Crimean War and restored the peace of Europe, and Napoleon was appointed arbiter. At the zenith of his power and with the future of his dynasty seemingly secured, it did not appear altogether presumptuous when in replying to the congratulations of the Assembly he expressed a hope in the brightness of his son's future as heir to the throne of France.

Eugénie's position was greatly strengthened by this happy event, for now, should she survive her husband (as seemed probable from the difference in their ages), as mother of Napoleon the Fourth she would have still greater influence in public affairs. Her marriage to Napoleon the Third had revived memories of Josephine. Like the wife of the great Emperor she had been born under a southern sky; like her she had seemed destined from the cradle to wear a crown; and as long as she remained childless there were not lacking hints that a similar fate might be in store for her. But Providence had ordained otherwise. As a mother Eugénie was seated more firmly than ever on the throne of France, and universally regarded with respect, almost with reverence. Gifts flowed in from all sides. No less than twenty-eight orders were bestowed on the baby Prince. Messages of congratulation came from all parts of the Empire. Even the fishwives of the Halle came to offer their good wishes, and engravings of the Empress and her child were scattered by hundreds of thousands throughout the country.

BIRTH OF THE PRINCE

In the early Summer of 1856, terrific floods caused much suffering and distress in many parts of France, in consequence of which there was some talk of having the Prince Imperial's christening celebrated quietly. Unwilling, however, to lose an opportunity of showing the world that his dynasty, though young in years was inferior to none of the older monarchies in wealth and splendor, Napoleon determined to send the flood victims one half of the sum which would originally have been devoted to the christening festivities, and with the other half he still managed to make an impressive display.

Not for many years had there been such excitement in Paris as on that summer day, which was to witness the baptism of the heir of Napoleon the Third. At six o'clock in the morning the pealing of bells and the thunder of cannon proclaimed that the great day had come, and at the first sound, swarms of eager spectators poured into the streets. All the boulevards and squares were filled in a few hours, and by the time incoming trains had deposited their freight of strangers and provincials, the crowds were so dense it was impossible to cross the Seine. A deafening shout greeted the appearance of the gilded state coach bearing the little Prince with his governess and nurse; nor was the enthusiasm lessened when close behind followed the happy parents with their suite. No less a person than the Holy Father at Rome was godfather to the Spaniard's child, while Queen Josephine of Norway and Sweden

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acted as godmother. The ceremony at Notre Dame was most striking and impressive. All the clergy of France were present; on entering the great shadowy Cathedral, dimly lighted by the myriad wax tapers on the altar, one might easily have imagined himself suddenly transported to a scene in the Middle Ages.

That evening the city of Paris gave a magnificent banquet in honor of the imperial family, at which the whole court and many foreign guests were present. It was held in the great hall of the Hôtel de Ville, lit up by eighteen thousand wax candles. The silver service used was made expressly for the occasion at a cost of two hundred and fifty thousand francs and the flowers alone came to twenty thousand francs. Two orchestras alternated in furnishing music; and at the close all present rose and sang "*Vive l'Empereur!*" The popularity of the Empress was proven by a surprise that had been prepared for her in the form of a diorama representing the various places with which she had some special association: — Granada her birthplace; Madrid, with the Prado; the forest of Compiègne; Fontainebleau, where the Emperor had confessed his love for her; the chamber which she had occupied in the Élysée before her marriage; the wedding of the imperial pair at Notre Dame; the Prince Imperial's apartment at the Tuileries; the palace of St. Cloud; and the cascade in the Bois de Boulogne. At the conclusion of the banquet Napoleon and Eugénie ap-

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peared on one of the balconies of the Hôtel de Ville and were greeted with the wildest enthusiasm by the crowds that had gathered to admire the fireworks and the illuminations. All were charmed with the Emperor's graciousness and the beauty of the Empress, but most of all with the little Prince Imperial whom the people affectionately nicknamed "Lulu."*

*At his christening the Prince received the names Napoleon Eugène Louis Jean Joseph, but was called, like his father, Louis Napoleon.

Chapter VI

The Empress in Politics

NAPOLÉON'S position at this time seemed impregnable. France had played an honorable part in the Crimean War and covered herself with glory at the fall of Sebastopol. Yet the nephew of the great Napoleon had remained far from the field of battle himself, and felt the need of winning some personal laurels to add to his prestige. The shrewd policy of Count Cavour, the Italian statesman, had greatly increased the power of the kingdom of Sardinia; and thither the Emperor now turned his glances. At a secret meeting with Cavour he guaranteed the support of France to Sardinia in case of war with Austria; but before this pledge could be redeemed an event occurred which might have made the agreement of little avail. It deserves mention here as furnishing a proof of Eugénie's courage.

On the eleventh of January, 1858, a special performance of grand opera was to be given, and a crowd of loyal subjects had gathered about the theatre to witness the arrival of the sovereigns. As the state coach drew up before the entrance, two bombs were hurled at it, and a frightful explosion

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followed. Windows in all the neighboring streets were shattered, and a hundred and sixty persons, among them a number of soldiers and outriders, were killed or badly wounded. A fragment of shell pierced the Emperor's hat; and Eugénie, who tried to protect her husband's body with her own, received a slight graze on the temple, bespattering her white silk dress with blood. Yet, perfectly calm and undismayed, she stood up at once and called out words of reassurance to the panic-stricken people. As if nothing had happened, Their Majesties entered the theatre, and with her usual winning smile the Empress bowed her thanks to the burst of applause that greeted them. Felix Orsini, the Italian who had thrown the bombs, was immediately seized and thrown into prison with his accomplices.

In a proclamation issued on January first, 1859, the Emperor revealed his intention of severing friendly relations with Austria; and on the outbreak of war between that country and Sardinia, he hastened to the support of his new ally, May 10, 1859, publicly declaring that "Italy must be free from the Alps to the Adriatic." The victories of Magenta and Solferino, which followed, added fresh glories to the arms of France; and although the peace of Villafranca failed to redeem all his lofty promises, Napoleon was hailed as the deliverer of Italy.

Meanwhile there had been a change in the Government at home which greatly added to Eugénie's importance. Shortly after Orsini's unsuccessful

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attempt, the Assembly passed a law appointing her Regent of France in the Emperor's absence, or during her son's minority in case of his death; and on Napoleon's departure for Italy the reins of government were placed for the first time in her hands. It was a critical period at which to confide the direction of affairs to a woman; had the war been less fortunate in its issue, the situation might have proved as dangerous as it afterwards became, in 1870.

If any decisive influence on French politics was attributed to Eugénie on this or subsequent occasions, it was a mistaken idea. As a matter of fact her regency was little more than an empty farce in which Napoleon allowed his wife to play the chief part. It deluded the people and flattered the Empress to see her name at the head of all state documents; but absent or present, although he permitted Eugénie to share in the ministerial councils, he was careful not to trust the reins of government for any length of time to other hands than his own. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that the Empress, when she chose to exert herself, well knew how to achieve her ends. Once an idea became fixed in her mind she would assail the Emperor with arguments and entreaties until he finally yielded, if only for the sake of peace; nor did she scruple to intrigue against the ministers when they refused to carry out her wishes in the bestowal of honors and positions on favorites of her own, often quite unworthy of such favors.

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Her real political influence was greatly overestimated. Her talents did not lie in that direction, nor had she any conception of the intricate machinery of government. Absorbed in a thousand trifles, court festivals, fashions, and intrigues, she had neither time nor inclination to pursue such aims with any system or resolution. Yet there was one case in which she did make trouble by her interference. This was shortly before the Franco-Prussian War, when she brought all her influence to bear in behalf of the Church.

The Papal party had spared no pains to secure Eugénie's friendship and strengthen her in the conviction that she had been chosen by Providence as one of the chief supports of God's vicegerent on earth. Full of gratitude to the Deity for this special mark of favor, and firmly believing in her destiny, she yielded blindly to all the wishes of the clergy, thus openly proclaiming herself the head of the clerical party. She devoted her energies to the support of the Papal power and to a revival of the spirit Catholicism throughout the country. No mercy was shown to those who dissented from the old faith. Even her attendants, with few exceptions, were chosen according to their religious views. Naturally this overzealousness could not fail to excite much opposition, and Eugénie soon had not only the envy and prejudice of society to contend against, but the enmity of the free-thinkers, including many of Napoleon's best friends.

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Of these, Prince Napoleon was the most bitter. Quite as firmly as Napoleon the Third believed in his mission to be sovereign of France, did this Prince feel himself destined to the throne; but while the former supported his ideas with Napoleonic tactics, the latter based his claims chiefly on a remarkable likeness to the first Emperor. Louis Napoleon had worked hard to attain his goal. His cousin contented himself with spending hours before his mirror, arranging the Napoleonic lock of hair upon his forehead — a sign that he should one day wear the crown of France. As long as the Emperor was without issue he regarded himself as certainly the heir. The birth of the Prince Imperial therefore was a bitter blow to him; and when the law was passed giving Eugénie the power of Regent, his rage and chagrin knew no bounds. He had never been able to endure the Spaniard, but had hidden his dislike at first under a mask of cold politeness. Now that he no longer had any reason for concealing his true feelings, he gave full vent to his malice, annoying the Empress constantly by petty personal attacks, and circulating the most shameful reports concerning her private life.

Eugénie returned the Prince's hatred with all her heart. His dissolute life, evil tongue, and above all, the cowardice he had shown on more than one glaring occasion, made him detestable to her. She retaliated by exposing this side of his character on every possible occasion, thus provoking him con-

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stantly to fresh attacks. The relation between them was not improved by the Prince's marriage in January, 1859, to Clothilde of Savoy, the lovely young Princess to whom the people of Paris gave the name of St. Clothilde. He knew that his marriage to a royal princess would enrage the Empress. While Clothilde had yielded to her father's wishes in the matter, personally she felt nothing but aversion for the cynical, dissolute free-thinker, for many years the avowed lover of the actress Rachel; nor was he a person likely to capture the fancy of Victor Emanuel's innocent young daughter.

At court, as in her own household, Clothilde stood well-nigh alone, therefore. She excited the jealousy rather than the sympathy of Eugénie — while in her own heart the Princess of royal birth felt little but contempt for the adventurous Empress. She absented herself from court as much as possible and gathered about her a little circle of her own, those aristocrats who had scorned to pay homage to the Countess Montijo. Yet whenever obliged to appear at the Imperial Court, she fulfilled all the requirements of her position with charming dignity. Once when Eugénie, who found court etiquette most tiresome and fatiguing, asked if it did not weary her, she replied innocently, unconscious of the sting that lay within the words, "Certainly not! I have been accustomed to it all my life."

Although Prince Napoleon was the most hated of all Eugénie's enemies, he was by no means the only

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member of the Emperor's family who disliked her. Even the kindly, gentle Princess Mathilde looked askance at her cousin's wife, though she was tactful enough not to betray her feeling. Napoleon's friendly attachment for her had continued even after his marriage, and he used often to ask her advice in important matters; but the Empress never visited her, and the Princess, who had once presided at the Tuileries, no longer appeared there except on state occasions when it was unavoidable.

The general feeling against Eugénie that prevailed did not find open expression till 1861, when the Emperor returned as victor to his capital from Italy. The Italian people had chosen Victor Emanuel as their sovereign, and the unity of that country met with such approval in France, that when Napoleon failed formally to recognize the new order of things, many attributed his delay to Eugénie's influence. As a devout Catholic she would gladly have seen the hated Victor Emanuel's kingdom overthrown and the Pope's supremacy restored; and while Napoleon can scarcely have shared these feelings, he realized that it was to his interest to keep on good terms with the clerical party, and that to renounce the friendship of the Pope would deprive him of a powerful support. He therefore permitted the Pope to retain Rome and the "Patrimonium St. Petri," and, on the Empress's insistence, he agreed to leave a body of French troops in Italy to defend the Papal interests, at the same time publicly rec-

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ognizing Victor Emanuel as King of Italy, and the provinces revolting from the Church as parts of the new kingdom. This vacillating course pleased neither party, and blame was laid chiefly on the Empress, whose zeal for the Papacy was but too well known. Her exclamation, "If the Pope leaves the Quirinal, I shall leave the Tuileries! I would rather have the Emperor murdered than see him delivered over to everlasting damnation!" passed from mouth to mouth and added still further to the prejudice against her among the intelligent population of France.

Chapter VII

Private Life of the Empress

BESIDES the annoyances caused by the ill-will of the anti-clerical party, Eugénie at this time had also sorrows and anxieties of her own to endure. Painful as her youthful passion for the Duke of Alva had been, it had failed to affect the close affection of the two sisters — an attachment that only deepened as time went on. The Duchess and her husband frequently spent their winters in Paris, and were always sure of a cordial welcome from the imperial pair.

Eugénie's life before her marriage was one of such freedom that although she fulfilled all her duties as sovereign with dignity and apparent content, there were many lonely hours when her thoughts turned longingly to those youthful days in Spain and to the dear ones there, especially her mother, with whom the Duchess of Alva was now her only link. The Duchess had been afflicted for some time with an incurable malady, though Eugénie was ignorant of its serious nature. While travelling with the Emperor in August, 1860, she was shocked to receive word that her sister's condition had changed greatly for the worse. The august travellers were then in Algiers, and Eugénie begged Napoleon to turn back

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at once. But elaborate preparations had been made for their entertainment and to abandon the festivities would have been too great a disappointment to the people. Torn with anxiety, the Empress attended a grand ball given in their honor, and not till it was over did she learn the sad truth that her sister was dying. She sailed at once for France, but it was too late. Before she reached land the Duchess had expired. It was a terrible blow to Eugénie; overcome with grief she shut herself up in her own apartments, refusing to see any one. It was months before she recovered herself sufficiently to appear again in court circles.

Nor was this all. Although Napoleon's marriage with the beautiful Spaniard had been one of love alone, yet the passion with which she inspired him gradually cooled, and although he continued to treat his wife invariably with the same respect and admiration he had shown in their early married life, there were many occasions when he gave her cause for jealousy.

In these conjugal trials the Duchess of Alva had been her confidante and had helped her through many bitter hours. Now that this gentle comforter was gone she felt doubly the neglect so hard for her warm and generous nature to endure; and these sorrows, added to anxiety for the health of her son, cast a permanent shadow over her bright spirits. She fell more and more under the influence of the priesthood, devoted herself to religious works, had

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new convents built, and even thought of making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. This plan was afterwards abandoned, but her irritability, capriciousness, and bigotry reduced her household to desperation. The constant alternations of religious frenzy and feverish pursuit of pleasure, of extreme gayety and deepest melancholy, characteristic of the Empress's later life, were no doubt due to an overwrought nervous system, like the hysterical fits of laughing or weeping that often seized her without any apparent cause. But with so gay and sanguine a temperament as hers, these moods never lasted long; and her warm-heartedness never failed to win the affection of those about her.

Among the friendships formed by Eugénie, that with the Princess Metternich is of especial interest, since no lady of the Imperial Court was so much talked of and criticised as the young wife of the Austrian ambassador. From Vienna, where they had been favorites at the Austrian court, the Metternichs had come to Paris in 1860, shortly after the conclusion of peace between Italy, France, and Austria, and soon after their own marriage. Born of one of the oldest and most distinguished families in the country, Pauline Metternich was at once a type of the proud aristocrat and the gay, witty, thoughtless Viennese, full of original and daring ideas, which she took no pains to conceal. In the days of the Empire the Austrian Embassy was the rendezvous of all the rank, wealth, and intellect

of Paris. Disciples of art and literature, diplomats and government officials and Legitimists from St. Germain met in these salons. Even the Emperor and Empress often made their appearance there.

At their very first meeting the Princess had conceived the greatest admiration for Eugénie; and with the exception of her young niece Anna Murat (afterward Duchess of Monchy), for whom the Empress had an almost motherly affection, no one was so close to her as the Princess Metternich. Perfect sympathy of tastes, and a certain magnetic attraction for which there is no explanation, proved the foundation of an intimate friendship that lasted for years. Pauline's sparkling wit and vivacity were of just the sort to strike a responsive chord in so lively a nature as Eugénie's. She was the soul of all the *fêtes* at Compiègne and Fontainebleau, and added to the long evenings at court a life and gayety they often sadly lacked.

At home the Princess Metternich was an excellent wife and mother, and attended personally to every detail of her household. In society, however, she disregarded all conventions, spoke her mind freely on all occasions, and had the courage to stand up for her convictions. The brilliant witticisms and clever sayings attributed to her are numberless; they were repeated not only among the court and diplomatic circles, but even by the public. Her influence in the world of fashion was almost equal to that of the Empress, but she was always causing

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painful embarrassments to her imitators. One day she would appear dressed with a simplicity and plainness that would not have been permitted in any one else; the next, her costume would be of a costliness no one could possibly hope to rival. She was a clever mimic, and would delight the whole court with her imitations of Madame Thérèse, a well known music-hall singer, the Empress usually leading in the applause; yet on formal occasions no one at court could appear with greater dignity and stateliness. In fact Eugénie's fondness for her was partly founded on that weakness for birth and rank of which we have already spoken. She was peculiarly sensitive as to her own origin, and no greater insult could be inflicted upon her than any allusion to it. The French authoress Olympe Andouard relates an instance of this that almost severed the friendship between Eugénie and the Princess Metternich.

It was during one of the court evenings at Fontainebleau which happened to be most dull and tedious. Among those present, as usual, was the wife of the Austrian ambassador to whom private apartments had been assigned in a wing of the palace. Weary at last of the monotony, Pauline whispered to a friend that she would feign a bad headache and retire to her own rooms, whither the friend was to follow quietly with a dozen chosen ladies and cavaliers. No sooner said than done. The headache served as an excuse. The Princess withdrew and hastily prepared to receive her guests, who soon

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succeeded in stealing away unobserved. All was going well. The music and dancing were at their height, when suddenly the door opened and Eugénie appeared — to inquire for her poor Pauline whose “frightful headache” had filled her with sympathy. In spite of her nervous temperament Eugénie on certain occasions (usually unimportant) was not lacking in the necessary calm and self-possession. Instead of laughing at the lively scene before her, she was indignant and reproved the Princess sharply for her lack of proper respect.

“Madame!” replied the diplomat’s wife no less hotly, “you forget that I was born a great lady and submit to no reprimands!”

In consequence of this scene the Princess was forced to absent herself from court for a time, and only by degrees was the old familiarity restored.

Next to Pauline Metternich the most important member of the Empress’s small private circle was Prosper Mérimée, the clever author — “the Empress’s court jester,” as he laughingly called himself. He had first met the Countess Montijo while Eugénie was still a child, and the acquaintance had ripened with years into a close friendship which was shared by the imperial pair. Although not strictly speaking a member of the court, both Napoleon and Eugénie treated him as a member of their family, and the bigoted Empress not only honored him as a gifted author, but felt an almost sisterly affection for the avowed free-thinker.

Chapter VIII

Paris under the Second Empire

THE Danish writer, Hermann Bang, says:

“It was a strangely mixed society that formed the court of the Second Empire, and during this splendid period Paris became more than ever a brilliant social arena. New names and new celebrities sprang up like mushrooms and withered away as quickly. Since life was short, it must needs be rapid. Looking back upon it now, one is reminded of a juggler’s performance at the circus. The glittering balls fly about in bewildering numbers and seem to fill the whole air. Different performers come and go, but the dazzling display continues. This society was neither composed of the representative families of France nor yet of the mass of the population, who supported the Government, and to whom the Second Empire seemed a complete restoration of the glories of the First. Truly the richest legacy of greatness is the magic that lies in a name.”

Napoleon was well aware of the value of the name he bore. He had not forgotten that to it alone he owed his possession of the throne; and he determined that the name at which Europe had trembled and which all France adored should serve as the foundation

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of his power. As far as possible he tried to revive all the Napoleonic traditions and preserve the fond illusion of the Parisians. Everything about the court was conducted on a scale of the greatest magnificence. Uniforms of officials, ministers, and deputies were a mass of gold embroidery. The gorgeousness of the palace guards suggested the operatic stage; customs of the time of Louis the Fourteenth were even revived. Visits from foreign sovereigns were attended with an almost fabulous display, and with Napoleon's rising importance these visits became more and more frequent. Indeed there were times during the Second Empire when whole solar systems of potentates revolved about one another.

On Thursday evenings during the winter, dinners were given at the Tuileries for diplomats and state officials, followed by receptions and dancing. Four court balls were given in the course of the season, to which as many as five thousand invitations were issued, and which were marked by the utmost splendor. Both sides of the grand staircase were lined with palace guards. Guests waited in the galleries until the arrival of the sovereigns, when the doors of the great salon were thrown open and the Emperor and Empress took their places on the dais, the princes and princesses grouped about them. The Empress danced only the opening quadrille on these occasions, and at eleven retired with the Emperor to a smaller salon where there was also dancing.

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Eugénie possessed the truly royal gift of never forgetting a face or a name, and always had a kindly word or glance for every one as she passed through the crowded room; but when it was over and she reached her own apartments, she would be completely exhausted with the weight of the crown jewels, which she wore in the greatest profusion on these occasions. Sometimes she would not even wait for her women, but would snatch off the crown and heavy ornaments and toss them into the lap of the lady-in-waiting, who bore them carefully away, for each was worth a fortune. Besides these grand balls to which any one with the slightest claim to rank or position could easily obtain admission, the most splendid and original masquerades were given in Carnival time, to which invitations were more limited. During Lent there were no entertainments with the exception of four state concerts given under the direction of Auber, then court *kapellmeister*, and Count Baccocchi, director of the theatre, in which all the most famous artists took part.

Far more interesting than these semi-official affairs were the weekly Monday receptions held by the Empress in her own apartments. Only a select few were invited to these, and the Empress's "Mondays" soon became famous all over Europe. Napoleon and Eugénie received their guests with the greatest cordiality, and conversed familiarly with all. Here Princess Metternich shone her brightest; here too were seen the beautiful Princess Murat, Duchess of

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Monchy; the gallant Count Walewski, who so closely resembled his father, the great Napoleon; the Emperor's half-brother, the Duke de Morny; and his youthful friend and ally Duke Fialni de Persigny. Here Merimée's inexhaustible fund of wit and humor found full play. Here the Emperor's favorite, General Fleury, and the elegant Marquis de Caux (afterward the husband of Adelina Patti) led the cotillon and invented figures that made the rounds of Europe.

Scarcely less famous in their way were the hunting parties held by the court at Compiègne every autumn. To these only a few were invited at a time, and the weekly list of guests was prepared with as much care as if it had been some important affair of state. Fifteen new gowns of the costliest kind were regarded as indispensable by the feminine world for a visit to Compiègne. Many feigned illness to escape the expense of so many new *toilettes*, while others were almost ruined by accepting the invitations. Art, literature, and science were well represented at these gatherings; and once arrived at Compiègne, all received the most cordial welcome, no matter what their political opinions.

Next to court entertainments the most popular rendezvous for the world of fashion in the days of the Empire was the opera; and although it then had its home in the narrow *Rue Lepelletier*, instead of its present magnificent palace, this did not deter royalty and all the highest society from attending

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regularly. Full dress was required, and the costly gowns and the jewels of the ladies, with the brilliant uniforms of the men, lent an air of festivity to each performance that is usually seen only on some gala occasion. But if grand opera were the temple of art in which Eugénie showed herself most often, it was by no means her favorite place of amusement. She not only lacked all knowledge of the higher music, but it was distasteful to her; and even well written drama at the Théâtre Français had no interest for her. On the other hand, she adored anything amusing and had the greatest fondness for Offenbach's lively airs. Her musical taste may be judged by the fact that during the Czar Alexander of Russia's stay in Paris in 1867, she could think of no greater mark of attention than to send him tickets for a performance of the "Grande Duchesse de Gerolstein."

Her fancied resemblance to Marie Antoinette has already been mentioned; indeed, there were many points of similarity between the Spanish Countess and Maria Theresa's unfortunate daughter. Both possessed remarkable beauty, charm, energy, and strength of character. Both were boundlessly extravagant and open-handed, as both in their younger days allowed the pursuit of pleasure to banish all serious occupations. Eugénie avoided the imprudences of which Marie Antoinette was guilty, and instead of risking her popularity, did all in her power to preserve and strengthen it; yet she too was power-

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less to escape calumny. There were but too many evil tongues ready to suggest that a woman who owed her sovereignty to beauty alone was scarce likely to remain a pattern of virtue, and we have seen how even in her own family she had enemies who tried to undermine her reputation.

The court of the Second Empire was full of corruption and was abandoned to a life of pleasure and luxury. But it is ever the way of aristocratic society to seek amusement; and if at the courts of Berlin and London a more serious tone prevailed, those of Vienna, St. Petersburg, and Madrid were scarcely less frivolous than that of France under the Second Empire.

The Empress's daily life was very different from this; intermixed with the feverish pursuit of pleasure were many days of weariness and ennui. At eight o'clock she rose and devoted an hour regularly, sometimes two or three, to her favorite occupation, the study of her *toilettes*. At half-past eleven she breakfasted alone with the Emperor and the Prince Imperial, after which Napoleon would smoke a cigarette in his wife's apartment, chatting and playing with his little son. Kindness of heart was one of the Emperor's most marked characteristics. Indeed he was often over-indulgent with the child — a weakness Eugénie continually struggled against, with the natural result that the little Prince preferred his father to his mother. At one, every day he went for his drive in the Bois de Boulogne, and the Em-

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press retired to her study, back of the audience chamber, where no one was allowed to enter. Here her tastes and habits were best displayed, for in this room she had surrounded herself with all her most precious possessions, portraits of her family and intimate friends, busts, vases, statuettes, and all sorts of personal souvenirs, and a small set of bookshelves containing the works of French, Spanish, English, and Italian writers. Every day Eugénie wrote to her mother, a sacred duty with which neither *fête* nor illness, travel nor court entertainment, was ever allowed to interfere. Among others with whom she also kept up a lively correspondence were Queen Victoria and the Queen of Holland. After the Empress's personal letters were finished she summoned her secretary, Damas Hinard, with whom she went through the vast number of begging letters and appeals of all kinds she received daily, to each of which she gave her personal attention.

Adjoining Eugénie's bedchamber was an ante-room without windows in which a lamp was always burning, and from which a narrow stairway led to the Emperor's apartments. Concealed in the wainscoting of this room by sliding panels were a number of caskets, all numbered and marked in cipher. To look over and arrange their contents was one of Eugénie's favorite amusements. Here she kept not only her own private papers, but many interesting contributions to the history of Napoleon the First and his times, in the form of letters from statesmen

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soldiers, and scholars. All the Emperor's discarded documents and correspondence were carefully preserved by Eugénie, and stored away where only she could get at them. Napoleon was much amused at this mania of hers for collecting, and she herself used to laugh over it.

"I am like a little mouse, running around after the Emperor and picking up all the crumbs he lets fall," she once said.

The ladies-in-waiting did not live in the Tuileries; it was only during the summer that they were constantly with her, whether travelling about or at one of the summer palaces. Of these, some were naturally more congenial than others, but Eugénie had no choice in the matter of a companion; this was regulated strictly by the law of precedence. Day after day she entered her carriage, accompanied by whichever lady was entitled by etiquette to a seat in the imperial equipage, and drove through the Bois, bowing incessantly to left and right, and day after day she returned at exactly the same hour in time to dress for dinner.

Besides these monotonous outings, she sometimes drove out in the morning in a carriage drawn by only two horses. Each man and footman wore the plainest livery, and she and her companion were quite simply dressed. On these occasions she attended to all her charitable errands. She liked to investigate in person all the cases that especially appealed to her sympathies, and always carried with her a well filled

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purse, the money thus dispensed often amounting to a considerable sum in the course of a year.

"I could just as well send what I give to the poor," she declared, "but one should do a little good oneself. The sight of so much misery and suffering makes it easier to bear one's own troubles."

Of all the Empress's attendants the one to whom she was most attached was Madame Pollet, or Pépa as she called her. This woman, the only Spaniard in her service, had entered it in early youth, and remained with her ever after. She had accompanied her on all her travels and shared all the vicissitudes of her mistress, whom she adored and for whom she would have gladly died. She had charge of the Empress's wardrobe and personal belongings, and was untiring in her efforts to fulfil the slightest wish of Eugénie, who on her part, while she never allowed the distance between them to be forgotten, returned the affection and reposed the most boundless confidence in Pépa. Madame Pollet was supposed to have great influence with the Empress, and wives of high officials were not ashamed to court her favor and load her with gifts when they wanted something of her mistress. But Pépa, a modest little creature, had no desire to meddle with matters that did not concern her; besides she was far too busy and too much in demand by Eugénie to have time for other things.

The dinner hour at the Tuileries was half-past seven. At this meal the Prince Imperial, after his

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eighth year, was present as well as all the ladies and gentlemen of the court. Shortly before the hour, the Emperor went to his wife's apartments and escorted her to the Hall of Apollo, where the court awaited Their Majesties. As soon as dinner was served the palace prefect was notified, who in turn informed the Emperor; Napoleon gave his arm to Eugénie and the rest followed in order of rank. The ceremony was simple but strictly in accordance with etiquette. At table a young blackamoor, whom she had brought with her from Algiers, always stood behind Eugénie's chair, and waited on her with as lofty an air as if he were fulfilling some sacred office. He was said to be of noble birth, and proudly refused to serve any one but the Empress.

After dinner, which was served with such smoothness and precision that it seldom lasted more than three-quarters of an hour, the court returned to the Hall of Apollo, where the evening was spent, usually in a most tedious manner. The presence of the sovereigns prevented any spontaneous general conversation. The Emperor himself rarely spoke at all, while Eugénie, finding this atmosphere of repression unbearable, talked incessantly with the nervous vivacity peculiar to her. To vary the monotony of these evenings, reading aloud was sometimes suggested but it was difficult to find anything suitable for such an assemblage. A French or English romance would entertain the Empress but bored the Emperor horribly; while if a scientific work that

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interested Napoleon were chosen, Eugénie would yawn, therefore this too had to be abandoned.

The Emperor was fond of *solitaire*, which he often played; but it did not amuse Eugénie except when she did not feel like talking, which was seldom the case. There was never music or card-playing at the palace. Once in a great while the Empress would have a sudden fancy to do something, as when, for example, late one evening a courtier was hastily despatched to procure all the necessary materials for making artificial flowers, that she might learn the art at once. On another occasion it was the desire to model in clay that must be gratified on the spot.

Punctually at ten, a table was brought in with tea and cakes, which the ladies served themselves, and conversation now became general. Between eleven and twelve the Empress withdrew to her own apartments and generally retired at once though she sometimes kept her reader, Mlle. Bouvet, to read aloud to her after she was in bed. As a general rule, however, she preferred to read to herself which she did often and very rapidly.

Chapter IX

Eugénie as a Leader of Fashion

THE stairways and corridors in the Tuileries were so dark that they had to be lighted summer and winter; and this, with the bad ventilation, made the palace so unbearable in warm weather that the court spent the summer months away from Paris, at Fontainebleau, St. Cloud, or Biarritz. Of these resorts Napoleon's favorite was St. Cloud, where he usually went to recuperate from the severe attacks of illness to which he was subject. Here he was quite happy, playing with his dog Nero, a faithful companion for many years, or tending his roses in the palace garden.

Eugénie, on her part, preferred Biarritz, in the Pyrenees, and it was owing largely to her that this resort became by far the most popular in France, casting Dieppe, Trouville, and Boulogne completely in the shade. Nowhere in the world could there have been found such a medley of wealth and poverty, aristocrats and adventurers, high-born dames and demi-mondaines of all classes, as at Biarritz in the days of the Second Empire. It had attractions of all sorts, hotels and restaurants, shops and bazars of every description, as well as a casino containing

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a theatre, concert hall, ball and gaming rooms, from the broad terrace of which there was a most charming view.

Opposite the town, on a rocky plateau across a narrow arm of the sea, stood the Château Eugénie. It looked more like a barracks than a palace, and owing to the salt spray flung all around it in time of storm, no sort of vegetation would thrive there; but when the Empress stepped out on her terrace in the morning, the sea lay spread out at her feet. The ever changing lights and shades of sky and water lent variety to the solitary landscape; while looking the other way she could watch the gay equipages rolling by toward the baths. This to her was the ideal combination of nature and civilization. In this beautiful spot Eugénie spent some of her happiest hours, forgetful of the tedium of court life, her husband's infidelities, and the persecutions of Prince Napoleon and his followers. Here her natural high spirits found vent, and she romped like a child with her little son, or revelled in the sea-bathing, feeling for the first time since her early youth the charms of a life free from excitement or ambitious aims.

Like all the children of Spain, she had the deepest affection and reverence for her native land, that land with which were connected so many happy as well as painful memories, and where her mother still lived. Now that her griefs had lost their sting, she often longed for Spanish ways and customs and to hear once more her childhood's tongue. From

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Biarritz she could make frequent excursions into Spain, where she hailed even the poorest peasants with delight, chatting with them in their native language, overwhelming them with gifts, and receiving in return so warm a welcome that it more than repaid her for all the humiliations of her youth. She also visited Madrid, the scene of her early adventures, and was received with the greatest distinction by Queen Isabella, from whose court she had once been dismissed on so slight a suspicion.

But it was not only in Spain that Eugénie won all hearts. Whether receiving royal guests or visiting some charitable institution, presiding at court or opening an exhibition, it could not be denied that she had been wonderfully equipped by nature for the great role she had been called upon to play on the world's stage. Part of her popularity was also due to the kindness of heart which was such a conspicuous trait in her character through all her changes of fortune. Many admirable institutions in Paris owe their origin to the Empress Eugénie's benevolence. In the Summer of 1865, while acting as Regent during the Emperor's stay in Algiers, she devoted herself to improving conditions in the reform schools for children. Accompanied by a prefect of police she made a visit in person to "La Petite Roquette," a house of correction. A terrible state of affairs existed in this institution, where, since it was intended more for abandoned children than those in need of punishment, a cell system had

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been introduced to prevent communication between the two classes. The dark court was also divided by high walls; and here the five hundred wretched inmates could be seen creeping about their cages like wild beasts, with bowed heads and dull, vacant faces.

The Empress's motherly heart overflowed with pity at sight of these children's sufferings. She appointed a commission at once to make a change in this dreadful system and attended all the meetings, which were held at the Tuileries, with the greatest interest and enthusiasm. A member of the commission took advantage of one of these meetings to oppose the Empress's project. "The idea is all very well, Madame," he declared, "but there are so many obstacles in the way of its execution that it is difficult to see how any remedy can be provided. To discuss the question is merely an excursion into the realm of sentiment."

"Pardon me," replied the Empress gently, "but this is a question of humanity, not of politics." And she finally carried her point. The youthful prisoners of La Roquette were sent into the country, and the cell system was abolished. It was not without anxiety that the warders received the new inmates, fearing it would be a hard task to manage them and that the well-behaved children would be corrupted by the others. Results proved, however, that the Empress was right, for even the most depraved and hardened culprits improved with kind treatment and work in the open air.

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Equally worthy of note was the day spent by the Regent at St. Lazare — a place of confinement for abandoned women. News of the Empress's visit to this place spread like wildfire over the city, and on leaving these poor, despised creatures she received touching proofs of the people's devotion to her. The crowds assembled in the streets murmured blessings on her, while the women knelt to kiss the hem of her gown.

Toward the end of September, 1865, cholera broke out in Paris, and the court, which was then at Biarritz, decided to return to the capital at once. The memory of the terrible epidemic of 1849 was still fresh in the minds of the people; and when, after apparently subsiding, the disease broke out again with renewed violence a terrible panic ensued. The courage and self-sacrifice displayed by Eugénie during this time won universal applause; the newspapers, even those hostile to her, were loud in praise of the royal "sister of charity." On the twenty-first of October the Emperor made a long visit to one of the cholera hospitals, and on leaving ordered the sum of fifty thousand francs to be distributed for the relief of the sufferers. Eugénie, to whom he had said nothing of his intention, was much disappointed at not having accompanied him. The next morning she drove from St. Cloud to Paris, where she made the rounds of all the cholera hospitals herself, going from bed to bed with words of cheer and comfort. Once, pausing beside a man

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who was dying, she took his hand in hers gently and spoke some words of sympathy to him. Thinking it one of the nuns, the poor fellow summoned up his last remnants of strength to kiss her hand. "Thanks, sister," he murmured. The sister of charity who accompanied the Empress leaned over and said:

"You mistake, my friend; it was not I, but our gracious Empress who spoke to you."

"Never mind, sister," interposed Eugénie, "he could have given me no more beautiful name —" a saying which was repeated and long remembered among the people.

* * * * *

Yet much as Eugénie had endeared herself to the masses by her fearlessness and kind-heartedness during the cholera epidemic, it was not long before the feeling against her on account of her bigotry, extravagance, and frivolity again came to the surface, not alone in court circles but throughout the whole Empire. To lay to the Empress's account all the follies and indiscretions, all the worldliness and self-seeking, of Parisian life at that time, would be most unfair; yet it cannot be denied that her influence had much to do with the luxury and the eccentricities of fashion that prevailed. Doomed by her rank to a life of idleness and inactivity, the lack of proper food for heart and mind forced her energies to find outlet in trifles. The gratification of her vanity became the chief object of life. With the sceptre of France, her slender hand also grasped

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that of the world of fashion — a domain in which she was no beneficent sovereign, but a tyrant whose yoke was borne without a murmur. Even when she was a young girl her costumes excited envy and admiration for their originality, and at every watering-place she visited, bungling imitations of the beautiful Spaniard's *toilettes* were to be seen in hotels and gaming halls. In Paris her influence soon began to be felt, and almost before her name had become familiar to the people her waistcoats were being copied and sold by all the fashionable tailors, and the high-heeled riding boots she had worn at Compiègne were adopted by every French court lady. Every morning, as we have seen, before going to mass, Eugénie devoted one or two hours at least to the study of dress.

Her bedchamber, with its adjoining oratory, was at some distance from her other apartments and lacked all stamp of individuality. The bed, heavily draped with rich hangings, was raised on a dais, and resembled a throne. In this room she kept the Golden Rose that was presented to her by the Pope, and beside the bed stood one of the palm branches sent her each year by the Holy Father with his blessing. Yet here she spent far less time during the day than in the dressing-room next it, where there were several large movable mirrors enabling her to see herself from all points. On the floor above, connected by elevator and speaking tube with her private apartments, were the rooms

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occupied by her waiting-women. Here was a vast store of silks, velvets, and satins, with gowns and every conceivable article of wearing apparel. Ranged along the wall were rows of dresses and wraps of all sorts and colors, with receptacles for hats, shoes, fans, parasols, etc. In one of the rooms were several life-sized forms which the Empress had had made, exactly reproducing her own figure in size and height, and dressed like living women to the smallest detail; for in spite of the pains taken by the modistes and tailors to win her approval, it was seldom that a costume entirely suited her.

She was tireless in her quest for novelty. With each change of season, quantities of models and materials were brought to her to choose from, and numberless conferences were held with Madame Virot, the court milliner, as well as Worth, the famous ladies' tailor, whose reputation she founded. He would often send her costumes costing one or two hundred thousand francs, and once he made her pay as much as fifty thousand francs for a simple cloak. Even these works of art met with no mercy in their original form, but were always remodelled and altered according to her orders, until her own carefully cultivated taste produced the desired effect of perfect harmony. All the artistic talent she possessed was devoted to the study of dress, and under her sway fashion rose into the realm of art. Inseparable from the image of the beautiful Spaniard is the energy with which for eighteen long years

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she wielded its sceptre. Her greatest interest in life, it constituted at once her strength and her weakness — weakness because from it sprang the charge of folly and extravagance justly made by France against its former sovereign; strength, because of the art with which it enabled her to hold her place on the pedestal to which she had been elevated, and gave her the power to dazzle and fascinate not only the masses but also her equals and contemporaries.

Chapter X

Decline of the Empire

AS yet there had been no sign of change in Eugénie's fortunes. The sun of empire was still apparently at its zenith. France deemed herself invincible. The throne seemed secured to the present dynasty for all time. The Emperor's policy had received some severe blows, however, and disquieting rumors floated over from the ill-fated Empire he had founded in Mexico.

Maximilian and Carlotta had often visited the Tuileries in their younger days, and it was only by Napoleon's urgent persuasion and promise of support until his throne should be firmly established that the Austrian Archduke consented to accept the fatal crown. Mindful of this promise, in his hour of need Maximilian sent his wife to Europe to seek Napoleon's aid. She arrived in Paris at night, and without pausing a moment to rest after the long wearisome sea voyage she hastened to St. Cloud, her disordered dress and distracted appearance betraying her terrible agitation. She had brought over the letters Napoleon had written to her husband, promising his support. Handing these to the Em-

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peror, she flung herself at his feet imploring him to keep his word. But all in vain. Even had he wished, he could have done nothing; and sobbing aloud, half senseless with despair, Carlotta is said to have left St. Cloud with a curse on her lips, crying: "Louis Philippe's granddaughter should never have trusted her fate to a Bonaparte!"

But although Napoleon's political errors began to darken the halo lent him by the Crimean War, and although two important events in the world's history had occurred without his having any share in them (the wars between Denmark and Germany in 1864, and between Prussia and Austria in 1866), to all appearances the period immediately succeeding was marked by greater splendor and prosperity than ever. On the first of April, 1867, a second World's Exposition was opened in Paris. Once more a stream of people from all parts of the world poured into the capital. Never in the history of France had such lavish hospitality been displayed — not even during the magnificence of Louis the Fourteenth's time nor in the reign of Napoleon the First. A perfect galaxy of crowned heads was assembled at the French court, and the proudest princesses, the most conservative monarchs, vied with one another in marks of friendship toward "the upstart" and "the adventuress." And with what matchless grace, with what admirable tact, Eugénie played the part of hostess to her illustrious guests!

In consequence of an attempt to assassinate the

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Czar of Russia, history has preserved an account of the grand military review that was held on the seventh of June, 1867, in his honor and that of the King of Prussia. Living walls of spectators surrounded the plain of Longchamps where it took place. The glitter of uniforms, the flash of arms, and the flutter of banners made a brilliant scene in the summer sunshine. The guests arrived in state and took their places. The Crown Princess of Prussia and her sister Princess Alice of Hesse were already in their seats on the tribune, but no one heeded them. A general air of expectancy prevailed. Suddenly on all sides arose the shout, "Here comes the Empress!" and beaming with happiness, smiling and bowing graciously to all, Eugénie drove round the great plain through ranks of cheering thousands and alighted at the imperial pavilion. Directly behind her came the three monarchs on horseback, followed by the German Crown Prince and the Russian heir to the throne, while the massed troops presented arms and a blare of trumpets greeted Their Majesties. Eugénie took the seat of honor on the tribune, her glance travelling proudly over the glittering ranks of soldiers, the flower of the French army, and the shouting throngs beyond. As the sovereigns approached, Alexander of Russia and William the Great of Prussia rode up and bent to kiss her hand. The granddaughter of the wine-merchant Kirkpatrick, daughter of Manuela Montijo of doubtful reputation, receiving public homage from

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Europe's mightiest princes — well might Eugénie be proud and happy!

The review at Longchamps was one of the last of those brilliant spectacles that amazed the world during the Second Empire, although not the last of Eugénie's triumphs that memorable summer. Three weeks later the exposition prizes were awarded by the Prince Imperial, officiating as President, on which occasion were present the Prince of Wales, the Crown Princess of Prussia, the Crown Prince of Italy, the Duke of Aosta, the Grand Duchess Marie of Russia, and lastly the Sultan, with his son and two nephews. Side by side on the magnificently decorated platform sat Christian and Mohammedan, the bigoted Empress and the Turkish Sultan. He had no command of French, but the glances with which he followed her every motion plainly spoke the language of admiration. Intoxicated with gratified vanity and ambition, Eugénie believed herself at the summit of her greatness; but already the ground was trembling beneath her feet. On that very day Napoleon received news of Maximilian's tragic fate, and the shouts of the populace were powerless to drown the echoes of the rattle of musketry that came to him from Querétaro like a prophecy of evil.

One of Napoleon's most marked and singular characteristics was his firm belief in predestination. It was this fatalism that had led him to centre all his energies on winning the throne, and to it he also owed his cool personal bravery. With this indif-

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ference to danger were linked the irresolution and vacillation so conspicuous in all the political dealings of his later years. He tried in every possible way to lift the veil that hid the future. There was scarcely a fortune-teller of any repute in Paris whom he did not secretly visit, and, incredible as it may seem, their prophecies always made a deep impression on him.

It had often been foretold him, even before he ascended the throne, that Germany would be the cause of his undoing, and that was the reason why he could neither bring himself to support national unity in that country nor yet decide forcibly to oppose it. He had hoped the war between Prussia and Austria would weaken both powers so that he might be able to snatch the roast chestnuts safely from the fire; but Prussia's decisive victory left him helpless and irresolute, unable to nerve himself to any decisive action. The increasing power of that country caused a growing uneasiness throughout France, and the Emperor's credit began to sink. He tried to form new political alliances, but it seemed as if the hand of fate, which at first had led him on from victory to victory, was now against him, for he encountered only difficulties and disappointments. To play the role of protector to the Latin peoples had always been a part of Napoleon the Third's policy. It was no slight blow to him, therefore, when Isabella of Spain, with whom he was about to form an alliance, was dethroned just as a



*N*APOLEON THE THIRD



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meeting between them had been arranged. She sought refuge in Paris, where she was received with royal honors, and her son, afterwards King Alfonso the Twelfth, became the constant playmate of the Prince Imperial.

The revolution beyond the Pyrenees sounded the alarm for France, and clouds of insurrection began to appear on the horizon. Napoleon found himself forced to loosen the reins of government; and although the disturbances apparently blew over, opposition increased daily. With modification of the press laws in 1867 the situation grew worse instead of better; and when in the following year Henri Rochefort began the publication of "La Lanterne," the waves of revolution began to rise. This democratic Comte exercised a magical influence over public opinion in Paris, and his scurrilous journal, filled with venomous attacks on the whole imperial family, reached an enormous circulation. Napoleon's political blunders were not calculated to appease popular sentiment or his own anxious forebodings. To add to his troubles, he suffered greatly from a chronic physical ailment; and in the autumn of 1869 his health was so seriously affected that there was some talk of declaring the Prince Imperial of age, before the proper time. Eugénie's popularity too began to wane even among the middle classes, which had always formed her strongest support.

As every one knows, it was her cousin Ferdinand

de Lesseps who was the originator of the Suez Canal. With it his name will remain forever linked, while the Empress's share in this undertaking will doubtless soon be forgotten. He conceived the idea during a long residence in Egypt, and devoted a year of tireless labor to its execution; but it was her enthusiastic support that encouraged and urged him on and paved the way for his success. It was not all smooth sailing, however. Before the canal was finished rumors arose that it would not be navigable for large vessels. The stock fell heavily; and with their usual fickleness, the French people, threatened with heavy losses, blamed the Empress, who had done her best to encourage subscription to the stock. Instead of the shouts that usually greeted her appearance she encountered only an ominous silence; and so great was her unpopularity at this time, that she found it advisable when at the theatre to retire to the back of her box. Her desire to be present at the opening of the Suez Canal added fuel to the flame. One day it was announced by telegraph from London that Napoleon had negotiated a loan of ten million francs from English banks to defray the expenses of his wife's journey to Egypt. Of course it was totally without foundation, but the radical press hastened to spread the report with so many malicious additions that Eugénie was universally denounced for the vast sums she was supposed to have squandered.

Arrangements for her journey were continued,

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nevertheless. Preparations were made everywhere to receive the fair guest on so grand a scale that it is well worth a glance backward to recall the homage paid her so short a time before her fall. Venice, where the imperial yacht, the *Eagle*, first touched, was beautifully illuminated. The Italian royal family welcomed her in person; and a hundred singers serenaded her on the Grand Canal. In Athens she met with a still more flattering reception; but it was at Constantinople that the most elaborate preparations had been made in her honor. All the streets through which she was to pass were newly paved and a number of houses torn down that they might be widened. Accommodations for twenty thousand troops were erected, and near by, a splendid kiosk. A gorgeous sedan chair valued at over two hundred thousand francs was made expressly for her use, while for weeks the ladies of the harem were busy practising their curtsies and wearing high-heeled shoes. On the arrival of the *Eagle*, October 13, 1869, she was met by a fleet of twenty vessels, which escorted her through a double line of Turkish men-of-war, twenty-five on either side, each of which saluted with a hundred and one guns, the imperial yacht responding with an equal number. The shores of the Bosphorus were lined on both sides with troops. All the ships in the harbor were decorated with flags, and at the appointed landing-place the Sultan was waiting to receive his royal guest. The event was made a national holiday. All the

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provinces and dependencies of the Turkish Empire sent deputations to the capital to greet the French Empress; public celebrations of all kinds were held; and at night the illuminations on the Bosphorus were a magnificent sight.

A week later Eugénie reached Alexandria on her triumphal progress, where she was welcomed by Ismail, the Viceroy of Egypt, and from whence the journey was continued by rail to Cairo. Everywhere her appearance was the signal for an unbroken succession of *fêtes* and illuminations. At the celebration of the opening of the Canal her yacht was the first to pass through it. Seated on the flower-wreathed deck, amid the thunder of cannon and strains of music from all the ships' bands, she sailed proudly through the new waterway, not only France's sovereign and the patroness of the great undertaking, but Queen of Beauty and Fashion as well. Almost all the great sea powers were represented at the ceremony. The Emperor of Austria and the Crown Prince of Prussia with many other royalties were with her on the *Eagle*, but it was upon Eugénie that all eyes were fixed; for her the frantic shouts that rent the air.

Chapter XI

The War of 1870

THE spirit of revolution may be quenched at times in the populace of Paris, but it is never entirely extinguished. Napoleon the Third had held their turbulence in check for nearly twenty years, but now all signs seemed to indicate that an outbreak was imminent. The Emperor's best friends advised him to identify himself with the liberal party, which in case of any change of sovereignty would prove a valuable safeguard to his young and inexperienced son. Others were of the opinion that a war with Prussia was necessary to preserve the Empire and revive popular loyalty to the name of Napoleon. That such a war would at one blow shatter the proud imperial edifice, no one dreamed, least of all the Empress, who was at the head of this party.

Napoleon chose the former course. At the general election of 1870, the change from an autocratic to a constitutional government was approved by about eight million votes. For the other alternative he had a decided distaste. His watchword, "empire is peace," was no empty phrase on his lips, in spite of the wars into which he had been forced by policy.

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When at the victorious battle of Solferino he saw whole ranks of Austrians mowed down by his artillery, he ordered the firing to cease, in spite of the protests of his officers; and long afterwards he could never think or speak of this bloody engagement without a shudder. One of his most cherished plans was to bring about a general disarmament of all the great powers, and a presentiment that his ruin was near at hand made him the more averse to any conflict with Prussia. The pressure in favor of it grew steadily greater, however, and, weary of the burden of government, ill in body and mind, he finally yielded. War was declared on the most trivial pretext, July 14, 1870.

Heretofore the French people had shown no special interest in the subject, and the news came as a surprise; yet once the die was cast, the prospect of war excited the wildest enthusiasm. The Emperor and Empress were greeted with acclamation: the horses were taken from their coach and drawn by the youth of France; the imperial pair rode in triumph through the streets of Paris. The whole nation was aroused. Volunteers flocked to the banner of France. Shouts of, "To Berlin! To Berlin!" and the strains of the Marseillaise, filled the air. The ferment that had long been brewing having now found an outlet, the riotous element hastened to the frontier. Every day fresh bodies of troops departed. Paris was in high spirits, and news from the seat of war was awaited with confident assurance. From day to

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day it was expected that the Emperor would join the army; but it was not till the twenty-eighth of July that he finally took his departure, leaving his wife as Regent during his absence, and accompanied by the Prince Imperial, who was to have his first experience of warfare.

When Napoleon questioned Lebœuf, the Minister of War, concerning the preparations for war, he was assured that all was complete. The army was ready; everything in order, to the smallest detail. Yet how far from truth, alas, were these empty phrases! Reforms that had been begun under the preceding ministry were far from being carried out. Army organization was woefully defective. Even so important a post as Metz was insufficiently protected. Contractors defrauded the Government. All was confusion and lack of proper equipment. Under these conditions it is not strange that the overthrow of the Germans did not speedily follow. After some delay — far too long to suit the eager Parisians — came the first despatch, a message of victory. The indecisive action at Saarbrücken was construed into a glorious beginning of the war. The Emperor's telegram to his wife was printed all over Europe and stamped the Prince Imperial with an impression of ridicule that only his life-blood, afterwards shed at Itelezi, was able entirely to obliterate.

“Louis has received his baptism of fire. He showed admirable calmness and did not once lose his composure. One of General Frossard's divisions has taken the heights

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overlooking Saarbrücken on the left. Prussia will offer little resistance. We were at the front, with musket and cannon balls falling all about us. Louis has kept a bullet that struck close beside him. One of the soldiers wept to see him so brave. Our total loss amounts to one officer and ten men.

“NAPOLEON.”

This news was received with satisfaction but neither surprise nor enthusiasm. It was no more than was expected, and even in France there was much laughter over Lulu's “baptism of fire.” But soon came a change. The German victories of Weissenburg, Wörth, and Forbach followed in rapid succession. At the French headquarters an attempt was made to suppress the news of these defeats and no word from the seat of war was received in Paris. The ministers who went to St. Cloud to consult with the Empress found her in tears, and full of anxiety at the long silence. At length, however, rumors of the disasters reached the capital, and the people were beside themselves with rage and despair.

Early on the morning of Sunday, the seventh of August, the Empress came to Paris and immediately sent for the ministers and the presidents of the Legislative Assembly and the Senate. The next day Paris was declared in a state of siege and a proclamation issued by the Empress, urging the citizens to maintain order and rally to the support of France that her losses might be retrieved. She already

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imagined herself at the head of affairs, taking active measures for the defence of the capital, cheering on the troops, and firing them with courage, a role that particularly appealed to her fancy; but the appeal made little impression. The people, only too familiar with her fondness for theatrical effect and admiration, clamored for action. Declamation was little to the purpose. They wanted victories, not comedies!

Public irritation vented itself first of all against the ministry, which was forced to resign. Émile Ollivier was succeeded by the aged General Montauban, Count of Palikao, who had distinguished himself in the war against China; while Trochu was appointed Governor of Paris. Further to satisfy popular sentiment, Napoleon was forced to resign his position as Generalissimo in favor of Marshal Bazaine, who accordingly assumed the chief command of the army.

Under normal conditions the Emperor's place would now have been in Paris; but the new ministry, as well as the Empress herself, protested against his return. Disheartened by the long delays, sore with disappointed hopes, and furious at the supposed mistakes of the generals, the people of Paris were ripe for revolution, and only a spark was needed to set them aflame. The imperial pair were overwhelmed with scorn and abuse. Already their throne was tottering, and with the victorious advance of the Germans, conviction of its speedy downfall grew daily stronger.

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Never before had the Empress found herself in so critical a situation. The new ministry lacked the confidence of the public and could be of no help to her. She had no tried general to depend upon, and every trace of the troops' devotion to the house of Napoleon had long since vanished. She stood alone and defenceless against an enraged populace only awaiting a pretext to hurl itself upon her. With this daily-increasing excitement, the brawls and dissensions caused by the army's defeats on the frontier, and universal anxiety for the fate of the country, Eugénie began to understand how grievously she had erred in urging on this "little war," as she had referred to it in the beginning of the campaign. Fears as to the fate of her own husband and child made her realize for the first time the suffering of thousands of other wives and mothers. She felt the necessity of uniting with them in some active work, and was tireless in her efforts to atone in some measure for the wrong she had thoughtlessly committed.

In the days of prosperity her worst qualities had been uppermost; she had not shown the better side of her nature. It remained for misfortune to reveal her real strength and nobility of character. In spite of the feeling against her, she went about everywhere, personally superintending the care of the wounded. The brilliant salons of the Tuileries were turned into hospital wards. A new spirit seemed to animate her and to lend her fresh strength

in this time of danger. At night she rarely slept, and even when taking a brief rest during the day, her attendants had orders to awaken her the moment any message or despatch arrived. No matter how worn out or exhausted she might be, she would force herself to rise and hasten back to the bedside of the wounded where there was so much suffering to relieve, though she had no time to think of her own misery. Yet often in her own chamber, haunted by the agonized cries of the dying, she would pace up and down wringing her hands as if in bodily pain, tortured by anguish of soul. In these hours she prayed long and fervently for her dear ones and for her people, the women who suffered like herself, the brave men who were fighting for their country. A feverish activity possessed her. She tried to persuade Austria to assist France. She wrote to the Queen of England imploring her to intervene for the sake of peace. She pardoned over two thousand criminals. She superintended the preparations for the defence of Paris and held innumerable consultations with Trochu, in whom she placed the blindest and most implicit confidence. At the same time, however, she took the precaution of having all her important private and family papers conveyed on board the French squadron, as well as some of the principal works of art from the Louvre. She also had a list of the crown jewels made, to secure her against suspicion in case of extremity. Her own personal ornaments were sent to her mother in Spain. The

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strain and over-exertion of these weeks seriously affected her health and wrought a startling change in her appearance. Tortured with suspense, she waited from day to day for news from the seat of war; yet all that came brought so little comfort that her advisers thought best to conceal it from the people as far as possible.

At length came the final blow. On the afternoon of the third of September, as the Minister of Foreign Affairs was on his way to the Tuileries, he was met by the Superintendent of Telegraphs.

"I have just received a most important telegram for the Empress from the Emperor," he said. "I usually attend myself to the messages that pass between Their Majesties, but this one I have not the courage to deliver." It was the well-known despatch:

"The army is defeated and has surrendered. I myself am a prisoner.

"NAPOLEON."

The Minister went at once to Eugénie with this terrible news, the reality of which exceeded all that her darkest fears had painted, and her feelings at this moment may be better imagined than described. Yet even then she did not consider her own fate. Her only thought was for France; and she firmly refused to employ the troops in her own defence against the people, for that would have added the terrors of civil strife to those of war. Late that

evening the bad news reached the city, but instead of uniting to make a brave stand against the enemy, the populace rose in arms, and it was plain that the Empire's days were numbered. The streets were filled with surging throngs, shouting "Down with the Emperor! Down with the Empress! Long live the Republic!" On all sides was heard the expression, "An Emperor dies, but does not surrender."

About one o'clock that night the Legislature held a special session. Not a member was absent, and the galleries were crowded. Amid a deathly silence the president arose. He said:

"A calamity has brought us together here at this unwonted hour. I have called the session to discuss our present situation."

Not a sound broke the stillness. All eyes were fixed on the Ministers' bench. Count Palikao rose. The aged hero was no orator, but his voice was firm as he announced the disaster of Sedan. He added, slowly:

"With such news it is impossible for the ministry to enter into any discussion before to-morrow. I was called from my bed only a short time since, to come here."

The president of the Exchequer then put the question as to whether the meeting should be adjourned. "Aye-aye," shouted several voices. Suddenly a bushy head arose, and a loud, discordant voice made three motions:—"Deposition of the

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Emperor; Appointment of a provisional Government; Retention of Trochu as Governor of Paris." It was Jules Favre.

Only members of the Extreme Left subscribed to these motions, which were received with surprising indifference. One member of the Right protested against the Emperor's deposition, but an ominous silence greeted his words. For the rest of the night a similar silence reigned throughout the city. It was the hush before the storm.

That Eugénie was far from suspecting an uprising is shown by the fact that she made absolutely no preparations for flight. The next morning she arose early, heard mass in her private chapel, and made her rounds of the hospitals as usual. At nine o'clock she received General Trochu, who, although only a few hours since placed at the head of the new Government, still solemnly protested his loyalty to her. Later in the forenoon a deputation waited on the Regent to inform her of the appointment of a commission to assume control of the Government in her place, in other words, to request her resignation. She listened quietly to their explanation and dismissed them with the following words:

"What you mean to offer me, gentlemen, is the pledge of a peaceful future, on condition that I renounce the present and abandon in time of danger the post entrusted to me. That I cannot do. To such terms I certainly will not subscribe. Go back to the Assembly and say to General Palikao and

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his colleagues that I rely upon them implicitly; that I grant them full power to take any steps proper for the interest of the country, and approve the same in advance."

Meanwhile the public tumult increased in violence. The red flag was hoisted everywhere. A boy of nine years even climbed up and fastened one to the top of the bronze railing that surrounded the Tuileries. Thousands filled the Place de la Concorde, roaring the Marseillaise at the top of their voices. The Assembly had again met, but so many forced their way into the chamber, and the uproar was so great, that it was impossible to transact any business.

"Not here shall the Republic be proclaimed," shouted Gambetta, "but at the Hôtel de Ville!"

This suggestion met with great applause, and the deputies adjourned to that edifice, where a Government of National Defence was formed. The news that the Empire no longer existed quickly spread and was hailed with wildest enthusiasm. Not a voice was raised in behalf of the fallen dynasty. Vast throngs invaded the Hôtel de Ville and valuable portraits of the Emperor and Empress were hacked with knives, trampled under foot, and tossed out of the windows. The imperial emblems were torn to pieces, and the eagle, which could not be easily removed, was covered with paper.

"At the windows of the huge barracks filled with troops supposed to be loyal unto death to the Emperor," says an eye-witness, "I saw soldiers laugh-

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ing, waving their handkerchiefs, and shouting 'Long live the Republic!' Strangers hugged and kissed one another for joy. In the neighborhood of the Pont Neuf, people mounted on high ladders were busy pulling down busts of the Emperor, which were carried in mock state and flung into the Seine, shouts of laughter and applause greeting the splash with which the mutilated images of their former sovereign struck the water."

Chapter XII

Eugénie's Flight to England

THE Empress mean while was still at the Tuileries. One of the palace prefects had returned from the Assembly with news of what had passed, but she refused to desert her post even though the mob was already at the gates of the palace and a dull roar penetrated the deserted halls. Eugénie's question as to whether it would be possible to defend the Tuileries without bloodshed was answered in the negative by the governor of the palace, General Mellinet, and she still refused to have a drop of blood shed in her behalf. Nearer and nearer sounded the uproar, and the trampling of feet was now distinctly audible. Shouts were heard: "She will escape!" "Long live the Republic!" "Down with the Spaniard!" "Forward! Into the palace — forward!"

Prince Metternich and the Italian ambassador, Count Nigra, who had hastened to the side of the Empress, urged her to flee, as every moment that passed made escape more difficult. But to run away from danger was foreign to Eugénie's nature, and she could not bring herself to believe it necessary, in spite of the raging mob without trampling on one

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another, swaying now forward, now back, striving with shrieks and blows to make room and force open the gates of the palace, all animated by a single impulse — hatred for the imperial house. At length sounds of tumult were heard on the great staircase, and the Empress's attendants implored her to leave the palace and not expose their lives to danger.

"Is there no other way?" she asked in despair. "Is there nothing we can do to defend ourselves? At least, you can say I have done my duty to the last."

Deeply moved, they kissed her hand without replying; but the Prince urged them to hurry, as there was no time to lose. A dark cloak was thrown around the Empress, and, accompanied by her reader, Madame Lebreton, with the two ambassadors, Minister Chevreau, and a few members of her court, she consented at last to go. Escape was impossible through the palace courtyard; for the Place du Carrousel, from which it was separated only by a slender railing, was packed with people. Some other way must be found; but before leaving her rooms Eugénie went to the window and stood looking down for a moment on the seething mass below.

"Alas!" she cried, "what folly to spend their strength in this way, when the enemy is at the gates!" Then, as she turned to go, she added with emotion: "Unhappy palace! fate seems to have ordained that all crowned heads shall leave you in this way."

By this time her escort was reduced to the two

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ambassadors and Madame Lebreton. The others had already fled to seek their own safety. She took Count Nigra's arm, and Madame Lebreton followed with Prince Metternich. Through the Flora Pavilion of the Tuileries they hurried to the Louvre, the galleries of which they must traverse at full length to reach an exit on the side toward St. Germain. But here, too, the street was crowded with people shouting, "Long live the Republic!" "Down with the Emperor!"

The little party halted before the door, but behind them also sounded the roar of the mob. To turn back would be inevitably to fall into their hands. The risk must be taken; there was nothing to do but go on. Even at this critical point the Empress's courage did not forsake her; indeed, she had never given clearer proof of it than now.

"You are holding my arm," she said to Nigra; "do you feel it tremble?"

"Not in the least, Madame," replied the Count.

The gentlemen opened the doors. The ladies passed out, and Eugénie found herself face to face with the populace who were inflamed with hatred against her. She was within a hair's-breadth of sharing the fate of Marie Antoinette, or perhaps being torn to pieces by the rabble. The excitement was so great, there is no knowing what terrible scene might have been enacted had she been recognized.

Luckily a closed carriage happened to be standing near by, and with great presence of mind she rushed

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toward it. A street urchin spied her and shouted, "Look, look! the Empress!" but no one heeded the words. Nigra stopped and spoke to the boy to divert his attention while Eugénie threw herself into the carriage, followed by Madame Lebreton. Prince Metternich shouted an imaginary address to the driver, and off they went, safe at least for the time being. But their troubles were not yet ended. In her haste, Eugénie had forgotten her purse; and when her companion drew hers from her pocket she found to her horror that it contained only three francs in all, scarcely enough to pay for the carriage. To avoid a discussion with the driver, they determined to continue on foot, but whither, they had not yet considered. At the Boulevard Haussmann, therefore, they alighted, and while Madame Lebreton paid the coachman, Eugénie stepped into the shadow of a doorway.

It is said that the Empress knocked in vain at many doors before she succeeded in finding a temporary asylum in her own capital; but at length the happy thought occurred to her of applying to Dr. Evans, a well-known American dentist whom she had known for years and often received at the Tuileries. Arrived at his office, she had to wait with other patients in the anteroom till her turn came; but at last Madame Lebreton was able to gain admittance to the dentist and told him that the Empress was without, hoping to find a refuge under his roof until she could make her escape from Paris.

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Evans's astonishment was beyond words. Unaware as yet of the sudden change in affairs, he could not believe it possible that the Empress should have cause to fear for her safety. Nevertheless he begged the ladies to wait while he went out into the street to convince himself of the true condition of things. In a short time he returned, convinced that they had not left the Tuileries a moment too soon; and without a thought of his own danger or the possible detriment to his business, he promised to aid them to the full extent of his power. His wife was away at the time, and as luck would have it, he was expecting the arrival that day of two patients who were unknown to his servants. He now introduced the Empress and Madame Lebreton as these persons. His own bedchamber was prepared for Eugénie and an improvised couch placed in it for her companion.

While the Empress was thus being harbored in the house of the chivalrous American, and full of anxiety as to what the morrow would bring forth, all Paris was mad with joy. Men, women, and children marched up and down the streets all night, singing and shouting, oblivious of the disaster of Sedan and the country's danger, and rejoicing that the Empire was no more.

Evans, meanwhile, had instantly set to work. Under pretext of a professional visit, but in reality to prepare for the Empress's escape, he drove out that very day to the Neuilly Bridge where he was stopped and asked to give his name, also his desti-

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nation and his errand. One of the guards who happened to know him, however, called to his comrade to let the American pass.

"I may be frequently obliged to pass the barriers," remarked the Doctor coolly; "look well at me, my man, so that you will know me again and that I may not be detained unnecessarily."

His plan was already made. On his return he informed the ladies that they would be able to pass the Neuilly Bridge the next day under his protection if Her Majesty would consent to play the part of a mad woman. He would pretend to have a patient with him on her way to an asylum beyond Neuilly, while Madame Lebreton could pass as her attendant. Accompanied by a friend and countryman of Dr. Evans, who was taken into their confidence, they started off the next morning. All went well. The sentry at once recognized the doctor, while the Empress, leaning back in the carriage, her face hidden by a thick veil, passed unnoticed. This danger past, they reached St. Germain in safety, and then Nantes, where they put up at an inn.

"I have a lady with me whom I am taking to a private asylum," Evans explained to the innkeeper, "and I would like a quiet room with shutters on the windows."

His request was complied with without question, and here Eugénie and her companion were able to enjoy a few hours' rest. Evans's colleague returned to Paris with the doctor's carriage which they had

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used thus far, and a coach was hired for them by the landlord to convey the invalid to the institution where she was to be left in charge. Further to carry out the plan, it was privately arranged that the Empress should appear to protest against being taken there, and make such forcible resistance on the way that they would apparently be forced to take another road. They had driven for scarcely half an hour, therefore, when a loud dispute arose between Eugénie and the doctor, which became so violent that Evans called to the coachman to stop that he might try and induce the patient to go a short distance on foot.

"I will not — I will not!" stormed the Empress, and her screams frightened the horses so that the driver declared he would go no further unless the disturbance was stopped.

"I will never go to that place, I will not!" shrieked Eugénie afresh, and at last there seemed nothing for it but to turn back and drive to the nearest post station, whence the coach was sent back. As a further measure of precaution they changed conveyances at every station, now, however, taking the road to their real destination — the watering-place of Deauville, where Mrs. Evans was then staying.

For many weeks, as we have seen, Eugénie had lived in constant agitation and anxiety — the days full of exhausting labor, the nights without sleep — and had suffered both mentally and physically in consequence. She was no longer able to eat, and

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had lived for the last four or five days literally on nothing but black coffee and chloral, which she had been in the habit of taking in large quantities to drown her troubles. She wept almost incessantly; and even when sleep lent her a few moments' respite, she would start up suddenly, begin to talk and laugh excitedly, then as quickly burst into tears and relapse again into deepest melancholy.

After two seemingly endless days, the fugitives reached Deauville on the evening of September 6, and Evans took the Empress and her companion at once to his wife. Mrs. Evans was about the same size as Eugénie, and gladly packed up a part of her wardrobe with some necessary articles of toilet for the Empress's use, while the doctor hastened to discover what boats were leaving for England. Two vessels were in the harbor, the larger an American ship, the other a pleasure yacht, the *Gazelle*, belonging to Lord Burgoyne. Finding the former not sufficiently seaworthy, Evans applied to Lord Burgoyne, who at first flatly refused to take the Empress across, partly for political reasons, partly because a storm was brewing. But Eugénie's protector insisted so urgently that he finally yielded on condition that the ladies should not come aboard till just before the boat sailed, lest the fact that he had passengers should attract attention. Shortly before midnight Eugénie, accompanied by Evans and her faithful Lebreton, hurried on board the yacht, which did not weigh anchor, however, till the next morning.

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The dangers by land now lay behind the fugitives, but others still awaited them by sea. Soon a fearful storm arose, and the little craft was tossed about at the mercy of the elements. The crew, little suspecting that an Empress looked to them for rescue, labored on bravely and calmly, as is the way of sailors, who know at any moment they may be called into eternity. Still the storm increased in violence, and the danger grew greater every moment. The ladies were flung about the tiny cabin like bales of merchandise. By nightfall all hope seemed vanished. Pale as death, terror stamped on every line of his countenance, Lord Burgoyne appeared at the door of the cabin, crying that they were lost.

"It is all your fault!" he shouted, glaring wildly at the doctor, then rushed away as suddenly as he had come. The three passengers looked at one another in amazement, and seasick, exhausted, and disheartened as she was, Eugénie could not help laughing at the Englishman's frenzy of terror. Still the brave little *Gazelle* struggled on against wind and wave until at last the storm began to subside, and about three o'clock the next morning, after what seemed a miraculous escape, they reached the harbor of Ryde on the Isle of Wight.

With what feelings must the ex-Empress have once more beheld this coast! Must she not involuntarily have recalled that first visit with her mother to England so long ago, in her joyous care-free youth? And again, when she took that first important step

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toward recognition by the European sovereigns, and as the favorite of fortune, gay, courted, and admired, landed amid the enthusiastic shouts of the people, as the honored guest of Queen Victoria? To-day she turned to England for refuge — no longer the beautiful sovereign of a great European power, but a wretched fugitive, an unhappy woman exhausted with fatigue and faint for lack of food. Those shores on which she had once been hailed with triumph now in the gray dawn were sole witnesses of her mute despair.

Chapter XIII

The Empress in Exile

EARLY on the morning of the eighth of September, the landlord of the Hotel York in Ryde was awakened by a loud knocking, and found a man and two women standing outside the door. They had gone first to another inn, but had been refused admittance, their appearance was so bedraggled and forlorn. Yet worn and travel-stained as they were, the doors of the York were opened to them without hesitation, and here the Empress and her companions were able to rest for a few hours after their exhausting journey. That same afternoon, however, they went on to Brighton, where the Empress heard that the Prince Imperial had escaped through Belgium and landed at Dover the preceding day. Through all her own danger and distress she had been tortured by constant suspense as to the fate of her son. Now, therefore, she hurried at once to Hastings where she hoped to meet him; and that day witnessed the reunion of mother and child. But how different, alas, was this meeting from that of which Eugénie had dreamed, when the Prince — hailed with cheers from the troops and

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the people, and followed by a mother's proud hopes — had departed "à Berlin" under his father's care!

There could have been no greater contrast than that of the life that now began for Eugénie in Hastings, with her brilliant career as Empress, or even with that troubled war-time and the dangers and excitements through which she had passed. Torn by alternations of hope, fear, and disappointment, she had scarcely had time during the past month to think of herself, much less give way to her feelings. Here, at the Marine Hotel, for the first time she found leisure to look back on what had happened and to review her past life — that inevitable time of reckoning from which no life is wholly free. Hitherto she had known nothing but gratified desires, glittering triumphs, and realized ambitions. She had had no cause to distrust friends or doubt their loyalty, no experience of ingratitude. Rarely forgetful of a service done her, and incapable of falsehood herself, she had preserved an almost childlike faith in human nature. Now, for the first time, fate was to make her thoroughly familiar with this bitterest chapter in the book of experience. Scarcely had she turned her back on the Tuileries before her own servants rifled her apartments. Later, when news came that the rabble had broken into the palace and wrought havoc there, Eugénie's first thought was "Poor Trochu!"

"Why do you pity him?" asked her companion, in surprise.

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"Because he has sworn so often to me that only over his dead body should any assailant enter my palace, that I feel sure he must be dead," was the reply.

That this General, who so basely deserted his sovereign in the hour of danger, was on the contrary quite well and enjoying life in his self-appointed position as head of the Government is only a single instance of how those who in time of prosperity bowed lowest before the Empress were the first to desert her in misfortune. Every newspaper that she saw showed her the meaning of adversity. Those who had received the most signal marks of favor were the loudest now to denounce the defenceless woman. With petty spite, the Government of National Defence had destroyed all the emblems of imperialism and done everything in its power to represent the dynasty, which for nearly twenty years had upheld the welfare and prosperity of France, as a curse to the country. Anxious to discover, if possible, something derogatory to the character of the Empress, it had caused the palace to be searched for any private papers she might have left behind, but without success. Even the few letters that were published for the purpose of exposing her disclosed nothing in the least compromising.

Her jewels and dresses, with some ready money that was found in the Tuileries after her flight, were sent to her in England. Yet although she was forced to dispose of her diamonds to defray neces-

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sary expenses; and although Napoleon, to provide himself with funds, sold his private estate in Rome, the "Palazzo dei Cesari," for a few hundred thousand francs, it was persistently asserted in Paris that the imperial family were in possession of millions of francs with which they had enriched themselves at the people's expense; also that Napoleon had made enormous sums in foreign speculation and owned capital in Dutch, English, and American bonds.

Filled with anger and despair at these lies and petty persecutions, Eugénie found life at Hastings unendurable. The prying curiosity of the townspeople and of the crowds of strangers that flocked thither was a torment to her. Even the sea air she so loved did her no good; the magnificent view only served to rouse bitter memories of the happy days at Biarritz. The King of Prussia had offered her and her son a residence in Wilhelmsöhe, but she would accept no hospitality from France's enemy. At length, through Dr. Evans, she rented Camden House at Chiselhurst, whither she moved toward the end of September.

But even though dethroned and an exile, Eugénie did not altogether cease to concern herself with politics. While she was at Hastings, and the situation following her flight was so new as still to warrant recognition of her authority as Regent, Bismarck sent an envoy to her to discuss terms of peace. She replied that so long as there remained a single enemy on French soil, or there was question of even the

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smallest cession of territory, she would enter into no negotiations with him.

Bismarck was not the only one who tried to induce her to intervene in this matter. There was still one post in France that held out against the Germans, still one general at least who was loyal to the Empire. Marshal Bazaine was in Metz with a force of 170,000 men, all picked troops, including the Imperial guard which had so often filled the Parisian populace with pride at state reviews. Believing himself strong enough to exert some influence over the question of peace or a continuation of hostilities, he sent General Bourbaki to Chiselhurst, with the consent of the King of Prussia, to inform the Empress that he was in favor of concluding peace if she would so authorize him. Tempting as this opportunity of again wielding power was to Eugénie's active nature, she prudently forbore, realizing that her best plan was to withdraw entirely from the field of politics at present and await a more favorable opportunity, when she might work with redoubled energy for the restoration of her family. This course was also in accordance with the wishes of Napoleon, to whom she made a secret visit in October in order to consult with him, while General Bourbaki was at Chiselhurst awaiting an answer.

In spite of Eugénie's continued refusal to mix in any public affairs, the "salon at Chiselhurst" was persistently reported to be the centre of political intrigue; and Prince Jerome Napoleon, who in the

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absence of the Emperor wished to appear as head of the imperial family, presented himself at Camden House one day to demand of the Empress an explanation. A stormy scene followed between these two bitter enemies, and the "red Prince" was careful that a properly distorted account of the interview should be made public.

After an imprisonment of about seven months, Napoleon was at last free to return to his wife and son at the little home in Chiselhurst, where the imperial family continued to live in the simplest manner; for although Camden House did not lack comfort and even elegance, it was so limited as to space that it was impossible to accommodate more than one or two guests at a time. Yet the joys of family life compensated in a measure for all the luxury and state of which they had been deprived by fortune, and in this smaller sphere Eugénie lost none of the dignity and charm of manner for which she had been so conspicuous. It was the more easy for her to adapt herself to these new conditions as gradually a circle of their old friends began to gather about the exiles, and expressions of loyalty and devotion arrived nearly every day from France, with many proofs of friendship from Queen Victoria and other royalties.

A great task still lay before her — to provide for the future of her son. She had always been a wise as well as devoted mother, and had not failed to impress on the young Prince that more would be

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required of him than of others, in order properly to fit himself for the high position he would one day be called upon to occupy. Now that the throne must be won back again, it was doubly important that he should receive a thorough military education. This son was now her only thought. She centred in him all her hopes and expectations, for the Emperor's health — which had been poor for years — was now rapidly failing. She could never count on Napoleon the Third's return to the throne; but as the mother of Napoleon the Fourth she saw herself in fancy once again in France, more highly honored, even prouder and happier if possible, than before.

The chronic ailment from which the Emperor had always suffered threatened, toward the close of 1872, to take a fatal turn and his physicians advised an operation. Personally, Napoleon was strongly opposed to it; but the Empress, not realizing the danger, and perhaps with the secret hope that it might enable her husband to become once more a power in French politics, urged him to yield to the physician's advice. He submitted accordingly to the operation, but had not strength enough to recover from the shock; and on the ninth of January, 1873, the "dreamer" passed quietly away without a word or a sign.

Chapter XIV

Death of Prince Imperial

EUGÉNIE'S grief at her husband's death was deep and sincere. Over his bier she wept far bitterer tears than those she had shed during those dreadful days following her flight from the capital. Indeed she was so prostrated as to be unable to appear at the funeral. Human nature is elastic, however, and it was never the Empress's way to fold her hands and brood over her troubles. She found one source of consolation, moreover, in the constant proofs of attachment that reached her, not only from the friends that had remained faithful to her through all the changes of fortune, but also from many others who had long seemed to have forgotten their vows of allegiance.

As death had removed all possibility of the restoration of Napoleon the Third to the throne, his old adherents rallied to the support of his son; and as there was still a large Bonapartist party in France, it seemed not improbable that with the exercise of courage and patience the Empire might one day be revived. In 1873, by uniting with the Legitimists and Orleanists, they succeeded in deposing Thiers, who had been President of the Republic since 1871,

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and electing Marshal MacMahon in his place, a change greatly to the advantage of the Bonapartists, who now entered the political arena once more as a regular party.

In the Autumn of 1872 the Prince Imperial entered the military academy at Woolwich, where he studied hard and made gratifying progress; and on the death of his father he was generally recognized as heir to the imperial throne, in spite of all the efforts made by his cousin Napoleon to prevent it. Eugénie now lived only in this son and his future; no stone was left unturned to smooth his pathway to the throne. As yet he had a hard struggle before him; but her faith in his ultimate victory was supreme; and supported by ex-Minister Rouher, the leader of the Bonapartists, then as ever one of Eugénie's staunchest friends, she carefully but firmly gathered up the threads by which she hoped to guide the course of events.

On the seventh of February, 1875, the Prince passed the required examinations and left Woolwich with an officer's commission. He had developed greatly in every respect, to his mother's joy and the pride of his party, whose hopes were now fixed on him. His amiability and charm of manner won him friends wherever he went. Unlike his father, he objected strongly to any radical measures or political agitation of any sort, and hoped to recover what he considered his rightful crown by the natural allegiance of France. Besides her political ambi-

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tions for her son, Eugénie was anxious also to arrange a suitable marriage for him; but in this she was disappointed. The wooing of Napoleon the Fourth met with the same fate as that of his father. There were repeated rumors of a betrothal between him and Queen Victoria's youngest daughter, Beatrice, who is said to have cherished a warmer feeling than friendship for the exiled Prince; but, deep as was the sympathy felt for him by the English royal house, and true a friend as Victoria had proved herself, to entrust her daughter's fate to young Napoleon seemed to her a trifle too uncertain. When this plan failed, Eugénie fixed her hopes on the Princess Thyra of Denmark; and in 1878 the Prince made a visit to that country to try his fortune with the Danish court; but here, too, he was rejected as a suitor.

The Bonapartists now felt that to have any serious hope of gaining the French crown the Prince must first win his laurels as a soldier; they urged him, therefore, to join the English army, which was about to go to war with the Kaffirs of Zulu. Much as she desired to see her son seated on the throne, Eugénie shrank from this method of achieving it; but the Prince fell in at once with the suggestion, and unmoved by his mother's attempts to dissuade him, sailed for Africa with the English troops, leaving a message of farewell to his followers.

On the ninth of April, 1879, he arrived at the headquarters of the commander-in-chief, Lord

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Chelmsford, and took part in several actions with great spirit and courage. In May, while he was on a reconnoitring expedition in the neighborhood of Itelezi with a fellow officer and several men, the party was suddenly surprised by a band of Zulus who sprang out from behind an ambuscade. Abandoned by his companions, who fled to save themselves, the Prince held out bravely as long as he could, but at length one of the savages dealt him a fatal blow, and he fell, his body pierced with seventeen spears. The *Military Gazette*, in which the young Prince received honorable mention, says:

“Thus did an inscrutable fate grant to him what it cruelly denied both his father and the great founder of their race — to fall in battle, bravely fighting against the foe.”

The death of the Prince Imperial created the profoundest sensation. As soon as the news reached England, Colonel Sidney, an old friend of the family, was sent to break it to the Empress, but before he could get to Chiselhurst she had already heard of it. That morning all newspapers and telegrams had been carefully withheld from her, but her letters were overlooked. One of these was doubly addressed, to her and to Secretary Pietri, and contained an allusion to “the dreadful news” without mentioning what it was. She sent at once for the Duke of Bassano to ask for an explanation; and when he arrived speechless with emotion, she suspected that it concerned the Prince. Chilled with fear at what

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she read in his countenance, she stood as if turned to stone. That son, for whom she longed day and night, her only joy in life! The thought was so terrible, Eugénie could not pursue it to the end.

"Something has happened to my son," she groaned; "I must start at once for the Cape."

Unable to reply, the Duke went out into the hall, where he met Colonel Sidney, who brought confirmation of the sad tidings. The Empress sent again for the Duke and insisted upon hearing all, repeating that she should go to Africa at once.

"Alas! madame," said the Duke, "it is too late."

"Oh, my son — my poor son!" shrieked the mother, and fell senseless to the floor.

After the first paroxysm of grief was over, she neither wept nor spoke, but listened with feverish despair while the Duke related all the circumstances of her son's death, not withholding a single painful detail. Madame Lebreton then led her gently into her bedchamber where the Abbé Goddard tried to comfort her. But the religion that had been such a source of support to her through all her troubles now proved of little consolation. Her whole life had been bound up in her child, and now that this last earthly support had crumbled, all hope and joy lay buried in the dust. For several days and nights she neither ate nor slept, but remained sunk in a sort of torpor from which she roused only to ask in tones of agonized pleading if it might not be that her son was only ill or wounded, and she could go out

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to nurse him back to health. Fortunately for her life or reason, she at last found relief in tears, and now she wept unceasingly.

The whole world shared the stricken mother's sorrow, and thousands of messages of sympathy were received at Chiselhurst. Telegrams of condolence came from all the courts of Europe, as well as from President Grévy of the French Republic, Marshal MacMahon, and many others. Requiem masses were held in every Roman Catholic church in London. Especial sympathy was felt for her in Spain, but the consolation of weeping out her grief on a mother's bosom was denied her, as the Countess Montijo was then so old and feeble it was thought best not to inform her of her grandson's death.

Republican, not to say radical, as the French capital was at that time, the death of the Prince Imperial caused general consternation. The Empire was still fresh in the minds of all. At the birth of the Emperor's son innumerable prayers had been offered for both mother and child. Step by step the affections of the gay Parisians followed the little Prince, and when at the age of three he rode with his mother to Notre Dame to the thanksgiving services for the victory of Solferino, the state coach was scarcely able to make its way through the admiring and enthusiastic throngs. Since that day the Napoleonic dynasty had suffered many reverses. The Empress, once the pride and glory of her subjects, was an exile, surrounded by only a few friends,

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and living in comparative poverty. Now she had suffered the last and heaviest blow of fate in the loss of her only child. Yet many more hearts went out to Eugénie in this hour of trial than in the days of her prosperity. Great and small, rich and poor, friend and foe, united in heart felt sympathy for the grief-stricken mother. But it was a grief that was beyond consolation. She had done with life. "All is finished," were the words she constantly repeated, and sobbing aloud would bury her face in her hands to shut out the awful vision that was always before her — the body of her son pierced with cruel spear-wounds.

When the remains of the Prince Imperial, which had been sent back to England under a military escort, were borne into the hall at Camden House by some of his former comrades at Woolwich, a single cry of anguish escaped the Empress, but she did not shed a tear. All night she remained on her knees in prayer beside the coffin; at dawn, when the flame of the wax tapers began to pale in the growing light, she heard mass, after which she shut herself closely in her own room and did not leave it again till after the funeral services were over.

The burial of Napoleon the Third had been only the usual drama enacted in every family when a beloved one is laid to his last rest, but that of the Prince Imperial was a scene that touched even the coldest and most indifferent, and excited world-wide

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interest. At the Emperor's death, despite their grief, the mourners had looked with hope and confidence toward his son; now this last hope had vanished, and tears were seen even on the cheeks of grizzled veterans. Where hundreds had accompanied the father's remains to their resting-place, the son's bier was followed by thousands of every rank and station.

Early in the morning of the day of the funeral, July 12, Queen Victoria arrived at Camden House with her daughters Alice and Beatrice, and with her own hands laid a laurel wreath of gold upon the coffin. Many other royal and distinguished personages followed, and the expression of genuine sorrow visible on every face lent an air of remarkable solemnity to the occasion. The Archbishop of Southwark performed the burial rites for which some of the most famous opera singers had proffered their services. Those of Madame Caters and Christine Nilsson were accepted; but the latter, some of whose happiest memories were associated with the palmy days of the Empire, and who had then considered it her highest honor to sing before the now broken-hearted Empress, was for the first time unequal to her task. Her voice failed, and she burst into tears.

Broken by mental and physical suffering, the ex-Empress Eugénie still lives on, awaiting the moment of release that shall reunite her with those dearest to her on earth. She made a pilgrimage to Zululand to see the spot where her son met his death.

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She has frequented various watering-places seeking relief from the physical infirmities from which she suffers. She visits many hospitals and charitable institutions to minister to the sick and wounded; yet these acts of mercy serve only to revive her sorrows, and emphasize the void in her lonely life.

From Chiselhurst, which held so many painful memories, she moved to Farnborough, whither she also had the bodies of the Emperor and the Prince Imperial conveyed. With the Queen of England Eugénie enjoyed the same close friendship as in earlier years, and until the time of Victoria's death she was a frequent visitor at Windsor, although she never appeared at any Court festivities. She still receives frequent proofs of loyalty from France, and every year on her birthday she is overwhelmed with flowers and good wishes. Yet nothing can rouse her from her melancholy. Whole days and nights she sits brooding over the past, haunted by faces and presentiments of death. At one time her attendants even found it necessary to remove all the portraits of her husband and son in order to preserve her reason.

A sad change has also taken place in her appearance. Portraits of her in the early days of her widowhood show a still attractive figure whose unhappy fate is suggested only by her mourning and the lines about the eyes. But years such as she has since experienced count heavily. Her hair is now snowy white. The slender figure is bowed with age and



*T*HE EMPRESS-WIDOW

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grief. Scarce a trace is left of her wonderful charm and fascination, and in the pale mourner with sunken eyes and faltering step there is no longer the faintest resemblance to the once beautiful and splendor-loving Empress.

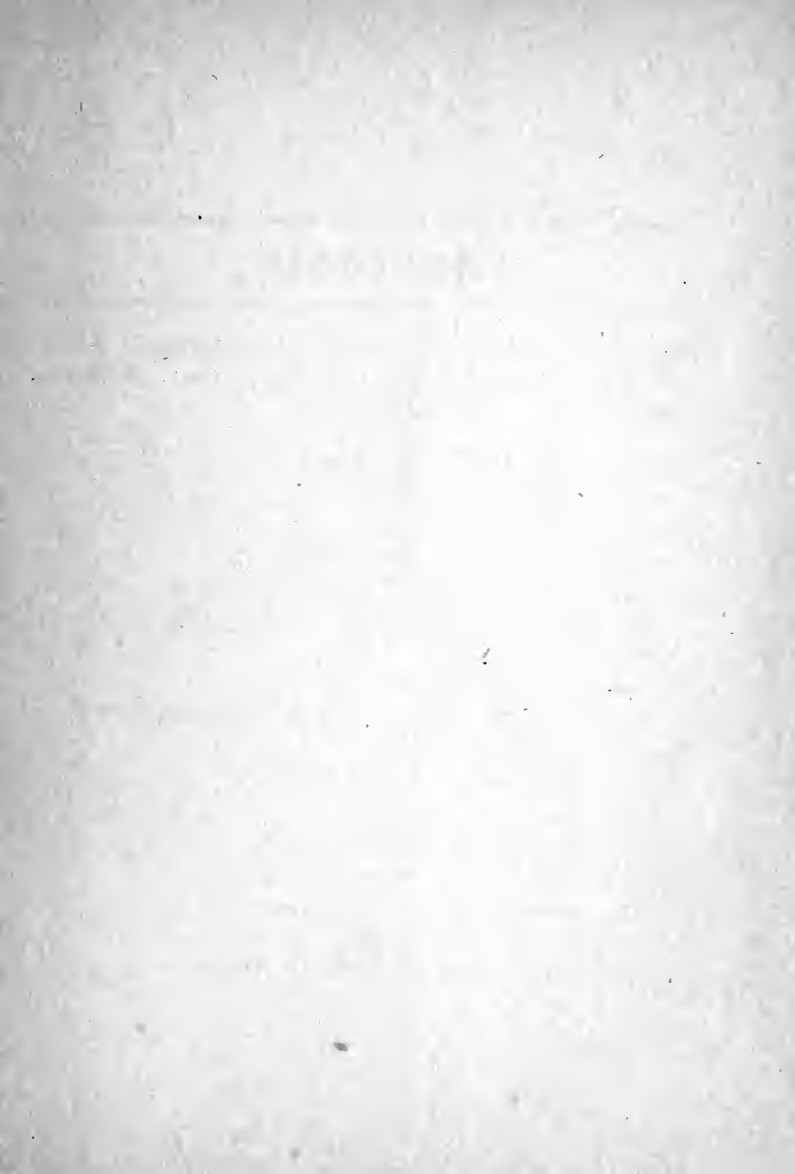
What a contrast, alas! between her youth and her age! In the one, a triumphant goddess, soaring from victory to victory, a sovereign tried by many disappointments and disillusionments indeed, yet never disheartened, never harboring bitterness or resentment in her heart: in the other, a broken and grief-stricken woman, weighed down with sorrows for which time brings no consolation, and whose thoughts are ever with her beloved dead.

The historian of the future, undazzled by the glittering splendor of the Second Empire, and unbiassed by sympathy for the unfortunate widow and mother, will scarcely judge the Empress Eugénie as leniently as the critic of to-day, yet more fairly than those of her own realm who have tried to blacken her reputation by calumny. He will find palliation for her faults, not so much because they were the result of her origin and training as because they were more than counterbalanced by her better qualities, especially her warm-heartedness and dauntless courage. He will also recognize that, as the wife of a usurper, she was beset with complications to which a born princess would not have been exposed, and that, taking all things into consideration, she filled that difficult position with credit to herself and France.

Appendix

THE following is a chronological statement of the principal events during the career of Empress Eugénie and Louis Napoleon:

- 1808 Birth of Louis Napoleon.
- 1826 Birth of Eugénie.
- 1815-30 Napoleon in exile.
- 1831 Revolt against the Pope.
- 1840 Descent upon France and Capture.
- 1848 Member of the National Assembly.
- 1851 *Coup d'État*.
- 1852 Elected Emperor.
- 1853 Marriage of Eugénie and Napoleon.
- 1854-56 Crimean War.
- 1856 Birth of the Prince Imperial.
- 1859 War with Austria.
- 1862 Interference with Mexico.
- 1870 War with Germany.
- 1870-71 Capture and Imprisonment.
- 1873 Death of Napoleon.
- 1879 Prince Imperial killed in Africa.



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